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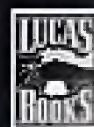
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ON THE COVER

Ion McDiarmid dons his new robes as Supreme Chancellor Palpatine in Episode II. Photo by Sue Adler.



from the editor's desk

WILL THE REAL URL PLEASE STAND UP?

» So we've had some problems getting you to a place where you can shop in our online store easily. It's been crazy, and sometimes you laugh because of how comically troublesome the whole process has become. And by "you," I mean "me."

In late November, we had to get issue 51 out the door so we could get it to the printer and get the magazine out to subscribers as fast as possible. Most of the magazine was assembled already; we just had to change the indicia, swap out some contact info in the Jawa Trader, and tell people where they could find our new online store. At the same time, we were putting together a letter to ship with issue 51 to apologize to subscribers and let them know what had happened to *Insider*, and that we would be back on our feet soon.

It was early December, and everything was happening very quickly. Somehow, three different URLs came across my desk: www.store.wizards/jawa, store.wizards.com/jawa, and swfan.wizards.com, all at the same time. I don't know where they all came from. I don't think I could figure it out if I tried. But there they were.

So what did we put on every other JT page in that issue? The wrong URL. Apparently, the "www" version of the URL was bad. It didn't go anywhere. If you'd tried, your browser would have told you "No such server." And it wouldn't even have been polite.

But the letter would be right, right?

Oh, no. Oh, no, no.

The letter had two URLs on it, and somehow—even though it was correct at some point—one of the URLs got changed too. It didn't merely get changed to a wrong URL, it got changed to a different wrong URL than printed in the magazine. I can only guess that the pit droids did it. I have no other reasonable explanation.

In preparation for issue 52, I had a series of emails with our e-commerce department. Now our e-commerce team at Wizards of the Coast is sharp. Really, I mean, I could shave my face with them. I'm certainly not slamming anybody when I reveal the emails that passed between us. They went something like this:

E-commerce: Jeff, the URL in issue 51 was incorrect. Will you print a correction?

Jeff: Yeah, I noticed. I'll print a correction and correct it in issue 52.

E-C: So it'll be correct then?

J: Yes. I'll correct it correctly.

In this whole series of emails, did you happen to notice where the correct URL might have been double-checked or verified? Did you maybe catch that? Are you laughing yet? (And by "you," I mean "you.")

Here's the URL to our online store: swfan.wizards.com. I mean it. It's the real deal. It won't be changing again soon. No fooling. I took this editorial over to the e-commerce people and had them read it. I handed it off to not one, not two, but three full-time, professional editors to check. Let me say it again: swfan.wizards.com. Let me repeat it for emphasis: swfan.wizards.com. Here it is in bold type: swfan.wizards.com. Here it is in capital letters: SWFAN.WIZARDS.COM. Here it is backward: moc.sdrziw.nafws. Here it is in Greek: ααζαρδω.ζομ. This is correct. There is no other. Accept no substitutes.

Please, go to swfan.wizards.com for the online version of the Jawa Trader. I swear I'll clamp those pit droids shut.

—JEFF
JEFF QUICK
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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rebel rumblings

You Like Us! You Really Like Us!

I have been waiting patiently for 4 months now to get my *Star Wars Insider* and I was getting a little fed up... I was extremely excited when I opened the mailbox today and found what else but the newest SWI issue! I ran into the house screaming at my mom that "IT CAME! IT CAME! IT CAME!" I immediately forgot about my homework and sat down to read the long awaited issue of my favorite magazine. I was amazed at the amount of cool information you people had included in the issue. I don't care if it is old news, it was great news. I think it was way cool that Harrison Ford did that helicopter rescue in WYOMING, my home state. People don't seem to recognize the people from Wyoming for what we are. I have never, EVER seen a letter or email or ANYTHING from a Wyoming citizen published in any worthwhile magazine. Yours is definitely a worthwhile magazine. I am just writing to express my joy at the new issue (I loved it and keep it coming) and that you people are doing a GREAT job! May the Force be with you always!

SARAH TOEWS
Casper, Wyoming

P.S. Thanks for putting in the Dear 2-1B column! It never fails to have me rolling on the floor laughing!

We're back! And we're BIG in Wyoming! Thanks, Sarah.

Hate Mail Hate

"I'm going to cancel my subscription because you don't provide enough of this and that...."

Would you hate mail writers just hush already? I do not understand the amount of hate mail you get from people who threaten to cancel their subscriptions. I do not find a single thing wrong with *Insider*. Without it we would

not know a lot of crucial things. I have been a member since issue 35 and this magazine has never done anything wrong. If you subscribed, then ENJOY IT!

JONATHAN ANDERSON
Midale, SK
Canada

I have many things to say about your magazine. To start, I think that the *Insider* is doing a great job providing fans valuable information on not only the prequels, but all the *Star Wars* movies. I can say from what I've read earlier that many people don't agree. But those people are being very pessimistic and (in my opinion) are very wrong.

The second idea concerning especially Rebel Rumblings, is the amount of negative email about how much you say about Episodes I, II, and III. I've seen many letters stating that you are giving things away! You guys are doing great giving us the information we want, but not giving the whole storyline. I really enjoy your interviews with Rick McCallum. I don't like this insulting mail, and I think fans everywhere should be thankful for the work the staff puts into this.

On a smaller note, I enjoy the artwork, especially the contents and the Last Page.

I was wondering if you are planning to include any info on Young Jedi cards. Any information on this would be excellent.

So, all in all, I'm just trying to say you guys are doing great! Keep it up!

DAN JONES
Ashland, OH

We're glad to have friends, even after the long silence! We hope you all still like what you see here in Insider.

As for Young Jedi cards, we probably won't be doing any articles on Star Wars card games here soon. BUT, Have you seen the new shining beacon of Star Wars fandom, Star Wars Gamer? Every two months, Gamer brings you original Star Wars fiction and in-depth coverage of a variety of Star Wars games from the roleplaying game to the latest LucasArts offerings to Star Wars card games! Look for it on magazine racks anywhere you can find Insider.

How do I know so much? I know a couple of insiders on staff there.

Fellow Female Fans

I am writing on behalf of my fellow female fans across the country and around the world. We feel that we are unjustly stereotyped as female fans of a series that many believe is only for "the boys." *Star Wars* is not just a "guy thing," and we are not fans just because of a few token female characters. Little boys are not the only ones who have daydreamed about becoming Jedi, smugglers, bounty hunters, senators, or fighter pilots. Little girls daydream about becoming all these same things, not because the characters are male or female but because they exhibit strength.

Many would want to believe that we are only fans because of the romance, which I find extremely insulting. Female fans are just as interested in space battles, the workings of the senate and the mysteries of the

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 70

wanna rumble?

Write to: REBEL RUMBLINGS, P.O. Box 707, Renton, WA 98057, or e-mail RebelRumblings@aol.com. Letters may be edited for clarity and space considerations. All mail MUST include your full name and home city. *Star Wars Insider* is not responsible for any unsolicited material received. This is not the address for Lucasfilm casting. Due to time constraints and the volume of letters received, individual responses are unfortunately not possible. Your weapons—you will not need them.

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Animated Violence





EPISODE II PREQUEL UP

CONDUCTED IN JANUARY, 2001

BY DAN MADSEN

RICK, WHAT IS THE STATUS OF EPISODE II?

We are still editing like mad. We are hoping we'll have a rough cut in the near future. George has spent every single day editing, ten hours a day. He comes out for lunch and that's about it. He and Ben Burtt have been working great together.

In about four weeks, we start shooting miniatures at ILM. That will take us about a year. The animatics group is doing a wonderful job. They have caught up to us. They have done about 800 animatic shots already. Life is good right now. George and I are preparing for the pick-ups that we'll

shoot in London in March.

HOW EXTENSIVE WILL THE PICK UPS BE?

Not that extensive really. It will be basic stuff that we know we are missing—certain shots and certain small things. After that, we'll do a fine cut in April, May, and June. George really does about five cuts. Up to now, he has been working on the assembly of the rough cut, but then he will do four more cuts. He is very methodical about it. He goes through each scene and frame and cuts a little bit here or adds a little more there. He has to make sure

that all the storylines meld together. Once he finishes that, we will probably have a more extensive shoot in the fall. Meanwhile, ILM is really ramping up to get started.

ARE YOU NOW WORKING EXTENSIVELY WITH ILM?

Yes, I go in there every day.

IF YOU COMPARED THIS FILM TO EPISODE I, WOULD YOU SAY THERE IS MORE EXTENSIVE VISUAL EFFECTS WORK ON THIS ONE?

[FACING] Producer Rick McCallum (far right) supervises as crew members roll the Supreme Chancellor's platform into place to shoot a scene in the Galactic Senate.

[THIS PAGE] R2-D2 gets some last-minute coaching from the boss, Director George Lucas, on the set of a Naboo starship interior. From all reports, the plucky droid breezed through the shot. Both photos by Sue Adler.

DATE

WITH RICK MCCALLUM
[PRODUCER]

EPISODE II PREQUEL UPDATE

» CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

I think it is much more extensive than the last one. This film has a much larger scope. There are more sets, and other things.

HOW ARE THE PERFORMANCES?

I must say that I think Hayden is fantastic! His relationship with Natalie is wonderful—they have a great screen presence together. I'm really happy about that.

WHEN DO YOU ESTIMATE WE'LL SEE THE FIRST TRAILER FOR EPISODE II?

Probably around the same time as the first Episode I trailer premiered, but it's hard to say.

SO IT SOUNDS LIKE THE EDITING PROCESS HAS CONSUMED GEORGE FOR AWHILE.

Yeah, we've been working hard for the last three or four months, but now is when we really go into production and start shooting physical miniatures, and that will go on for about a year.

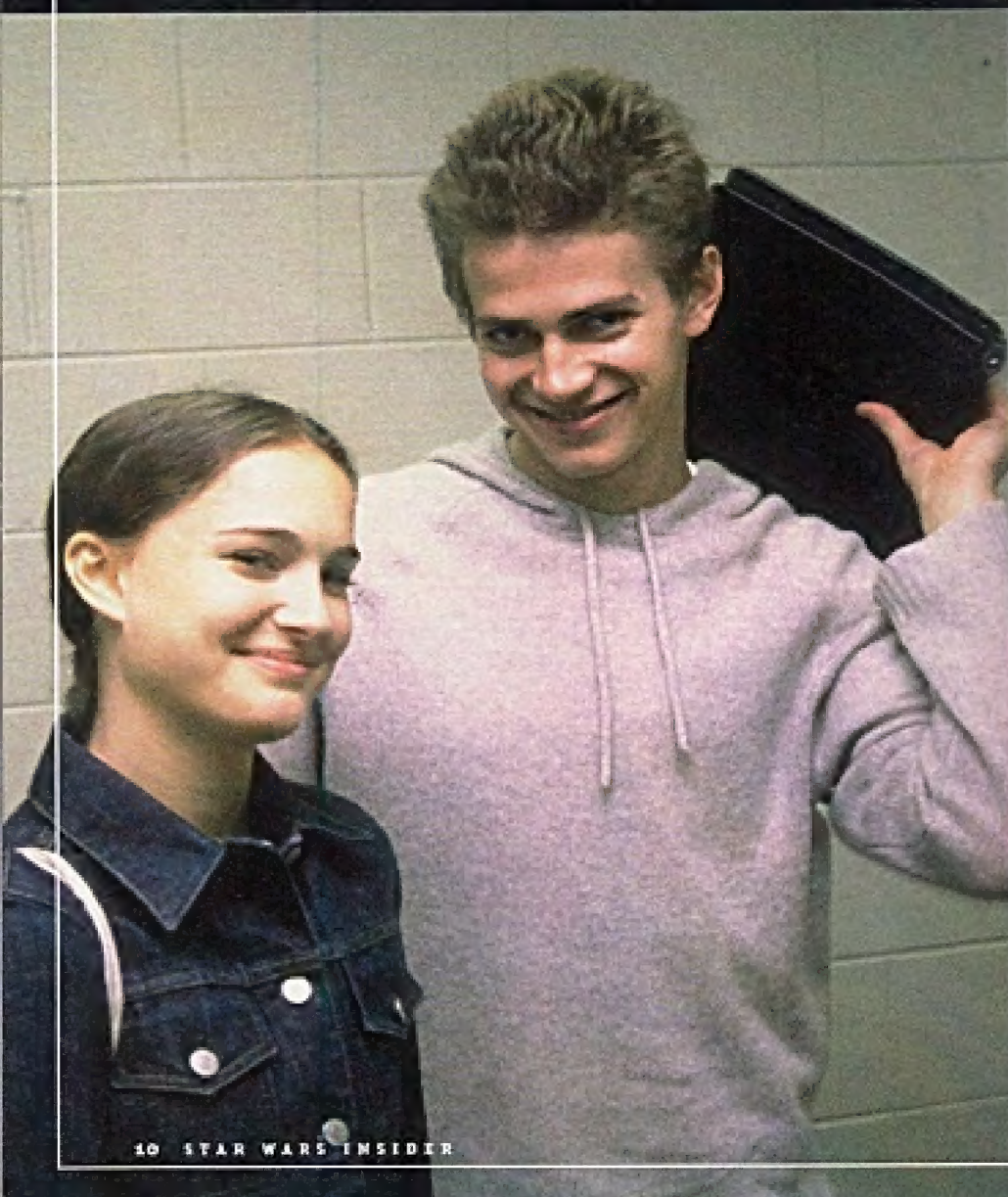
HAVE YOU BEGUN WORKING ON THE SCENE WHERE WE SEE YODA FIGHTING?

No, we haven't started on that yet. We've done the rough cut of what the basic action is, but we haven't actually started creating those sequences with Yoda yet.

WHEN DO YOU START REALLY THINKING ABOUT EPISODE III?

I won't do that until the day after Episode II is released. After that, I go straight into the third

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 15



[ABOVE, FROM TOP] Set pieces and props are being dressed for a room in Padmé Amidala's apartment for a shot that takes place shortly. Photo by Giles Westley.

Visual Effects Supervisor John Knoll of Industrial Light & Magic holds up a reference globe that will later help ILM play its role in adding digital sets and characters to Episode II. Photo by Sue Adler.

One of the largest sets for Episode II, the scene of a climactic confrontation, begins to take shape on Stage 2 of Fox Studios Australia. Photo by Giles Westley.



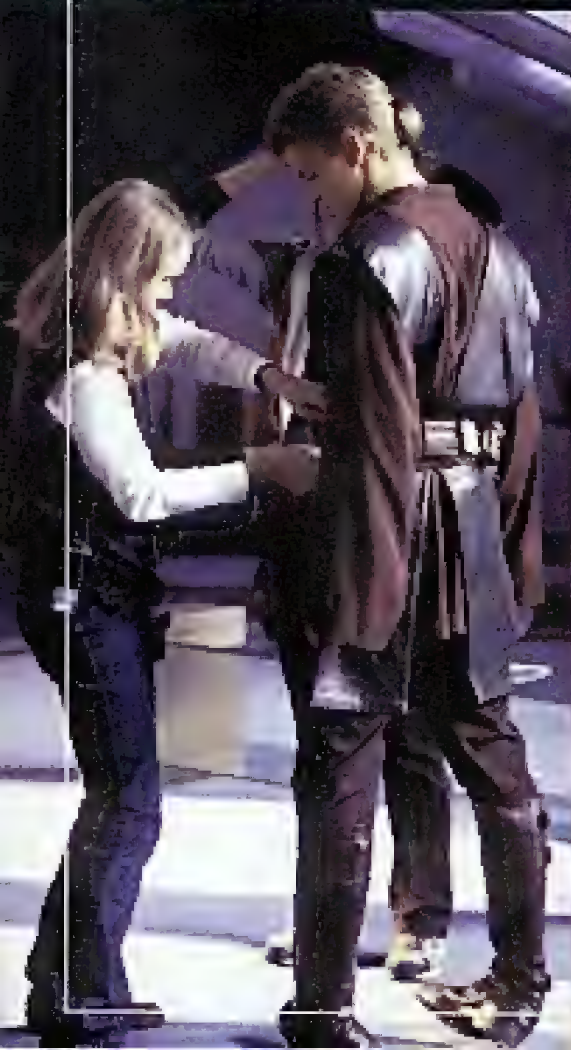
[ABOVE] "Anakin, meet your future boss." Actors Hayden Christensen and Ian McDiarmid meet for the first time on the backlot of Fox Studios Australia. Photo by Sue Adler.

[LEFT] On their way to a script rehearsal with director George Lucas are actress Natalie Portman, who plays Padmé Amidala, and actor Hayden Christensen, the new Anakin Skywalker. Photo by Sue Adler.

"I WOULD HAVE TO SAY THAT I FOUND WORKING WITH THE AUSTRALIAN CREW TO BE ONE OF THE FINEST EXPERIENCES FROM THIS FILM." —RICK MCCALLUM



[THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE] The Coruscant apartment of Padmé Amidala, whose spacious living room must serve state as well as personal functions. Photo by Giles Westley. » Hayden Christensen plays a 17-year-old Anakin Skywalker in Episode II. Photo by Sue Adler. » Heather Laurie, Key Stand By Wardrobe Department, adjusts Hayden Christensen's costume prior to the start of shooting. Photo by Sue Adler.



"WE CANNOT WAIT UNTIL THE DAY WHERE YOU CAN DISTRIBUTE A FILM ELECTRONICALLY AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, EXHIBIT IT DIGITALLY WHERE AN AUDIENCE CAN SEE A PERFECT MASTER OF YOUR FILM." —RICK MCCALLUM



Mace Windu (actor David Bowers) makes a point during a heated debate in the Galactic Senate. Photo by Sue Miller.

► CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

film. That's what we did on Episode II. Two days after Episode I opened, I was in Europe and George came over about three weeks after that and we began location scouting, setting up in Australia.

WHAT HAS BEEN REALLY COOL FOR YOU WORKING ON THIS FILM?

I would have to say that I found working with the Australian crew to be one of the finest experiences from this film. I am really fond of the crew and the Australian cast members we hired. They all did a fantastic job. It was a huge operation to oversee, and it came off successfully.

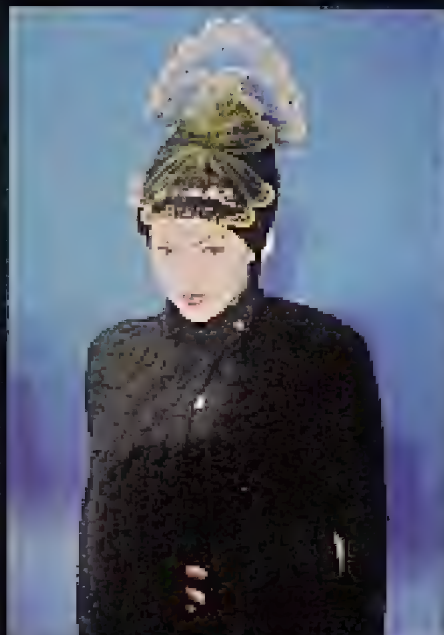
I also loved working with the 24P high def. camera. It was awesome. We are so excited by the results we've gotten from the camera. There is no question that, for us, this is the way we want to proceed in terms of getting images digitally. It is

incredibly cost effective but also provides more leeway and freedom. We cannot wait until the day where you can distribute a film electronically and, most importantly, exhibit it digitally where an audience can see a perfect master of your film. Those days are just around the corner. Nothing is going to stop it now. There are huge manifestations that will affect the industry from this, like any drastic or revolutionary change, but we're taking it one step at a time. The great thing is that audiences are going to win out on this.

HAS THERE BEEN ANY MOVEMENT ON A NEW INDIANA JONES FILM?

No, nothing. I don't think there will be for awhile. I know everybody's up for it. Harrison has re-expressed his interest, and so have others. But, right now, it's timing. I

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 24



[ABOVE] One of the many extras hired for crowd scenes in Episode II, this woman is a night club patron.

[BELOW] Ian McDiarmid has his hair touched up atop the Chancellor's speaking platform while David Bowers looks on during a break on the first day of filming of Episode II. Both photos by Sue Adler.





GEORGE LUCAS SELECT

Photo by Alicia Warkley

[IMAGES HAND-PICKED BY THE DIRECTOR]



Photo by Ben Burtt



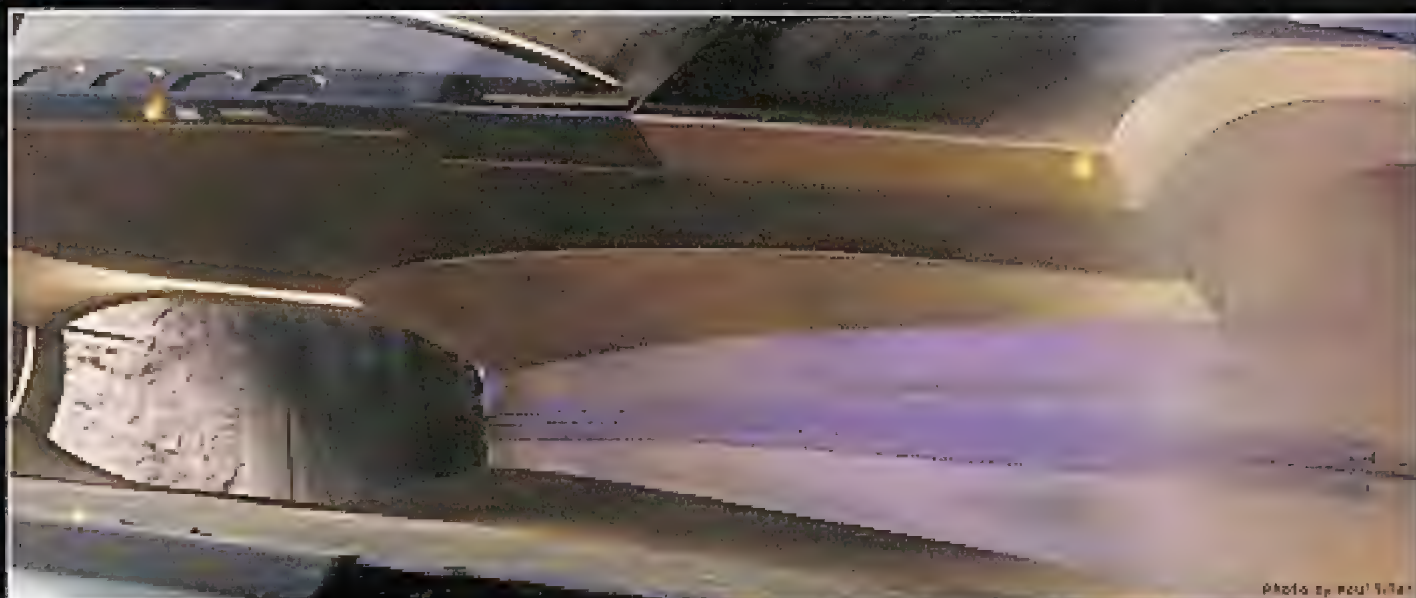


Photo by Paul Sitar

While George Lucas is making Episode II, he wants to share some personally selected moments of the process with Star Wars fans. These photos first appeared on the official web site, www.starwars.com. They appear here in an enhanced, printed version for the first time.



Photo by Jason Scott



Photo by Sue Fidler

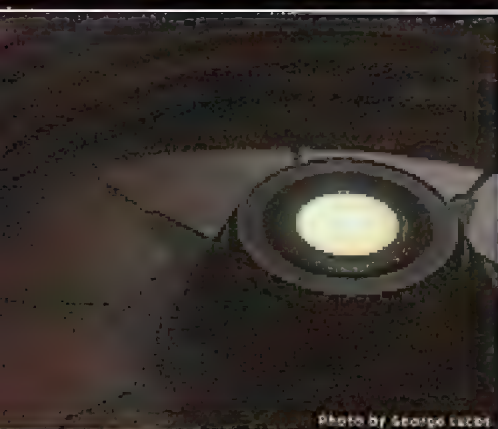


Photo by George Lucas

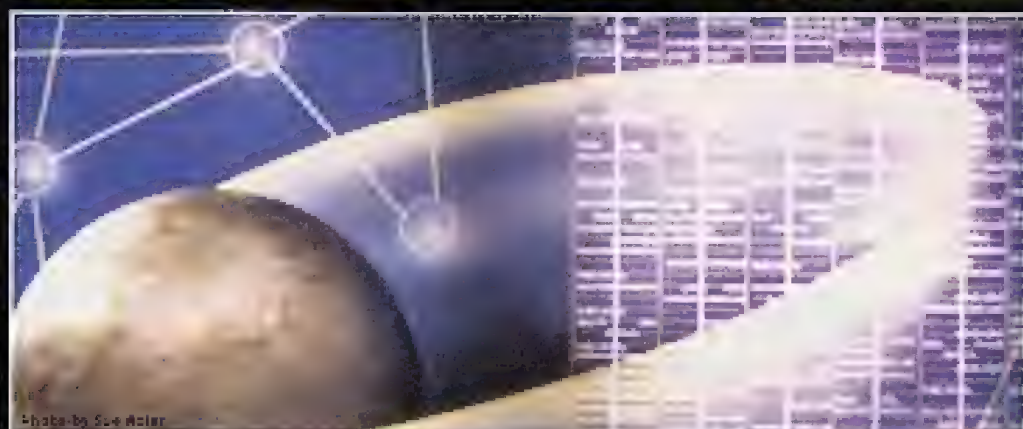


Photo by Sue Fidler

» CONTINUED FROM PAGE 41

know that sounds crazy, but getting those three guys together is really tough. They all know what they're doing for the next five years! George knows what he's doing until at least 2005.

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS AFTER EPISODE III?

I don't know. My plan is just to survive! I just want to be able to say, "I made it! I'm still alive!" This whole experience has been great fun. We're very fortunate to be able to make a living doing something that so many people are anxious to see and enjoy.

RICK, THANKS FOR YOUR TIME.

It's always a pleasure. ☺

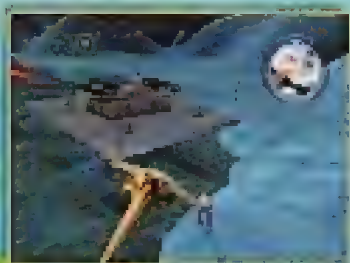
"WE'RE VERY FORTUNATE TO BE ABLE TO MAKE A LIVING DOING SOMETHING THAT SO MANY PEOPLE ARE ANXIOUS TO SEE AND ENJOY." —RICK MCCALLUM



[CLOCKWISE, FROM ABOVE] R2-D2 serves up liquid refreshment in the hold of a Naboo freighter. Photo by Lisa Tomassetti. » Director George Lucas huddles with Script Supervisor Jayne-Ann Tenggren, Documentary Director Spencer Susser, and Lucasfilm Director of Publicity Lynne Hale. Photo by Sue Adler. » R2-D2 Chief Operator Don Bies operates the controls while Arttoo Technician Trevor Tighe fiddles with the droid's dome in the tight confines of a Naboo freighter. Photo by Sue Adler.



FOR THE QUEEN! FOR NABOO! FOR FREEDOM!

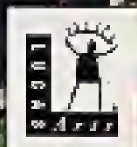


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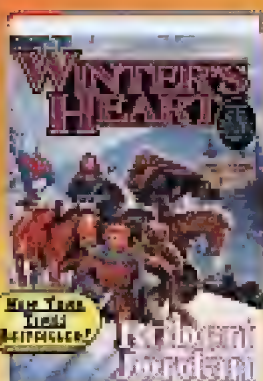
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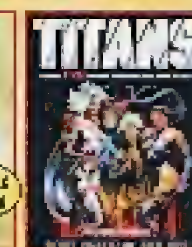
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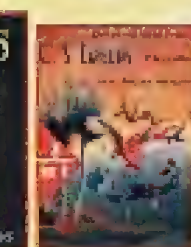
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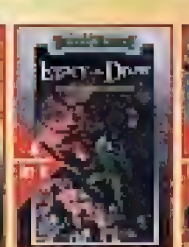
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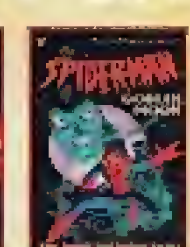
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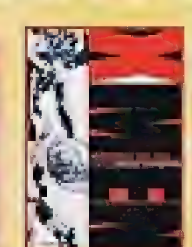
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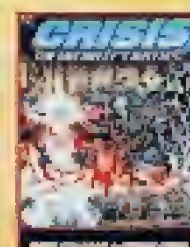
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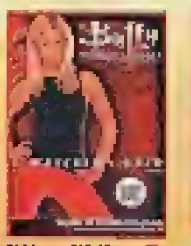
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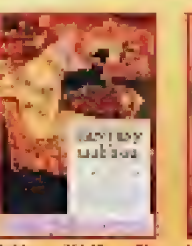
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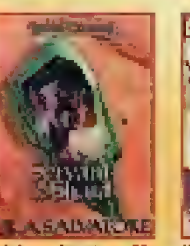
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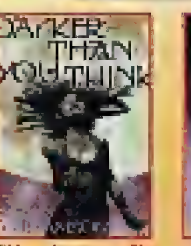
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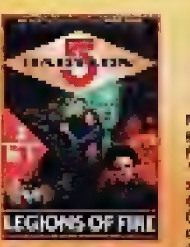
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STAR NEWS

» FROM THE WORLD OF LUCASFILM

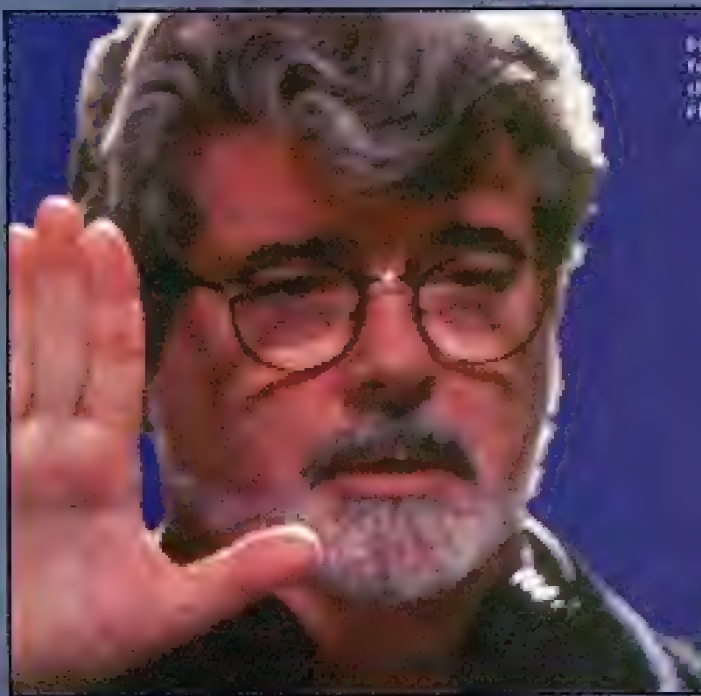
EPISODE II MARCHES TOWARD SPRING SHOOTING

England will soon see a return of the Jedi—not to mention some droids and possibly even the Sith—when Episode II of the Star Wars saga, which shot briefly at London's historic Elstree Studios last fall, returns to the United Kingdom for additional shooting this March.

But the stay will be quick—just a few days of filming in front of a blue screen. The previously scheduled shooting—following principal photography from June to October of 2000 in Australia, Tunisia, Italy, Spain, and England—marks a brief return to the soundstage for cast, crew, and director George Lucas in between long stretches of post-production.

"George really crafts the film in the editing room," noted prequel producer Rick McCallum, "so we always put several weeks of additional shooting in the post-production schedule. That way, George can add scenes as he edits the film. There are three additional shoots in the current schedule."

Although London was the home base for interior shooting for all four previous Star Wars films, that tradition changed when Lucasfilm pact to film Episodes II



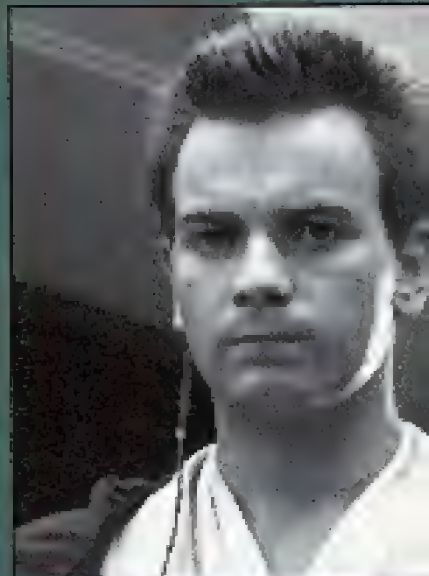
Director George Lucas frames a shot for the Panavision lens during the shooting of Star Wars: Episode II. Photo by Sue Adles.

and III at Fox Studios Australia in Sydney. A small amount of shooting for Episode II took place in England, but the bulk of Episode II was shot on soundstages in Sydney. The production plans to return to Australia for more photography later.

"We have a few days in front of blue screen in March, which will take place in England, since most of our Australian crew is currently working on other productions,"

McCallum explained. "Later in the year, we plan to return to Australia for the final round of shooting."

If the additional shooting slated for the end of 2001 is indeed "the final round of shooting," that will put Episode II (scheduled for release in summer 2002) on track to complete photography quicker than Episode I, for which some shooting took place as late as March 1999—only more than two months before the film's release. ■



PHANTOM MENACES FOX IN TELEVISION PREMIERE

Who says you need to pay for cable to get all the good movies on TV? Bypassing the usual steps of pay-per-view and premium pay cable channels like HBO and Showtime, *Star Wars: Episode I The Phantom Menace* will make its television premiere over the free airwaves of the Fox network this Sunday, April 29.

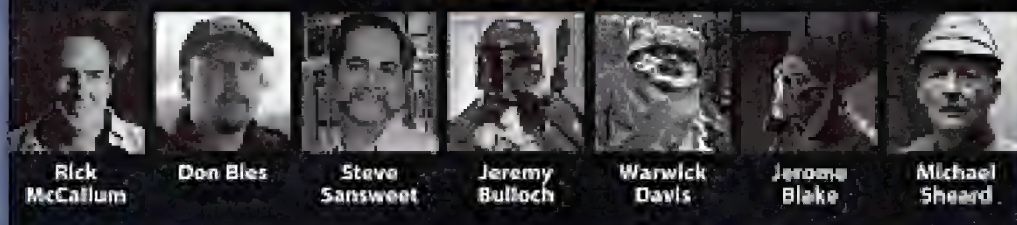
Coming to television nearly two years after it debuted in movie theaters—becoming the highest grossing film of 1999 and the second-highest grossing film of all time—and one year after it landed on home video, Episode I will occupy three hours of prime time, airing from 7–10 p.m. ET/PT. (Check your local listings for the Fox station in your area; in Canada, the film will air the same night and time on the CTV network.)

The landmark broadcast will be the first time fans will be able to view Episode I without buying a movie ticket or video, making Lucasfilm's choice to skip over pay cable all the more important; after all, *Star Wars* is for the people! ☺

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GUESTS:



STARS COME OUT FOR GERMAN JEDI-CON

In one of the largest official *Star Wars* conventions in European history, over 1,500 fans are expected to turn out for Jedi-Con 2001, the third fan event produced by The Official German *Star Wars* Fan Club. Scheduled for Easter weekend in Cologne, Germany, this year's Jedi-Con boasts appearances by four *Star Wars* stars, a symphony orchestra performance of the *Star Wars* themes, and an in-person update of Episode II from producer Rick McCallum.

Warwick Davis—who played Wicket in *Return of the Jedi* and two Ewok movies, as well as multiple roles in *The Phantom Menace* and the title character in

George Lucas's *Willow*—toplines the list of *Star Wars* actors scheduled to answer fans' questions, sign autographs, and pose for pictures. Also on the celebrity roster: Jeremy Bulloch, the first actor to portray Boba Fett in *The Empire Strikes Back* and Jedi Michael Sheard, who played the clumsy and stupid Admiral Ozzel in *Empire*; and Jerome Blake, whose seven roles in Episode I included Rune Haako and Mas Amedda.

In addition to the actors, Industrial Light & Magic's Don Bies will offer a look behind the scenes of the process from his perspective as an ILM modelmaker, former Lucasfilm archivist, and current head of the Episode II Droid Unit. Insider columnist and Lucasfilm

director of fan relations Steve Sansweet will also be on hand to answer fans' questions about his books, *Star Wars* collecting, and the latest developments in the *Star Wars* universe. McCallum, too, will take questions about the progress of Episodes II and III.

The 70-piece Metropolis Film Orchestra will perform selections from the *Star Wars* movies, as well as other Lucasfilm productions, in a performance inspired by the convention's provocative theme, "The Search for the Journal of the Whills." (And if you don't know what the *Journal of the Whills* is, well, you've got some reading to do.)

Fans will also make their way through a *Star Wars* art and model exhibit, a gaming zone,

▶ CONTINUED ON PAGE 23

OBI-WAN KENOBI LIVE!

Making a bold commitment to his roots on the London stage, prequel star Ewan McGregor announced plans to expand Natural Nylon—the British film production company he shares with actors Jude Law (*Ali*, *The Talented Mr. Ripley*) and Sadie Frost (*Bram Stoker's Dracula*)—into the world of theatrical production.

The formation of the Natural Nylon Theatre Company makes McGregor the second *Star Wars*

star after Ian McDiarmid to run his own theater group. But while McDiarmid's productions emanate from his home base at the Almeida Theatre, Natural Nylon has struck a deal with a company that runs fifteen different playhouses, from prestigious Ambassador's Theatre to fringe venue The Young Vic.

McGregor told a packed London news conference that he was not leaving movies but felt a

need to return to live theatre. "I left it for seven years before I went back on stage, and I know not to leave it that long again," he said. "If you are lucky enough to work in both [theatre and film], as Jude and I are, then you realize they both teach you about the other."

"This is purely an attempt to do some good theatre," he added. "We are not trying to strike out against anything else."

The actor later told the BBC that Natural Nylon will commission new writing, adapt classics, and "do our own thing." The company's first session will include Christopher Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*, an adaptation of Chekhov's *The Three Sisters* by renowned playwright Christopher Hampton (*Dangerous Liaisons*), and an adaptation of the John Fowles novel *The Collector*. ☺

STAR SIGHTINGS

RAY PARK TO STAR AS MARVEL COMICS HERO

After starting his career playing quiet-but-deadly villains like the Headless Horseman and a certain Sith Lord, **RAY PARK** (Darth Maul) will switch to the light side and play a hero for the first time, bringing to life the title role in *Iron Fist* for Arisan Entertainment. The movie signals Park's debut as a leading man and his second character based on a Marvel Comic following his turn as Toad in the blockbuster *X-Men* movie last year.

In *Iron Fist*, Park will play Danny Rand, who was raised in a mystical secret temple, where he learned to channel his life force into his fist and "strike with the force of iron." The film follows Rand's return to America, where he seeks to avenge the murder of his parents—allowing Park to display the martial arts skills that made him famous...

Two *Star Wars* stars will both be hitting the stage in separate London productions of Shakespeare's *King Lear*. **JULIAN GLOVER** (General Veers) will play Lear at the Historic Old Globe, while **OLIVER FORD DAVIES** (Sio Bibble) will also portray the tragic king in a production staged by the Almeida Theatre, the company run by **JAN MCDIARMID** (Palpatine), at the Almeida's temporary space while the main playhouse undergoes a renovation...

EWAN MCGREGOR (Obi-Wan Kenobi) is set to re-team with his *Trainspotting* co-star Robert Carlyle as rivals for the love of Mary, Queen of Scots, in a film to be produced by James Bond and Indiana Jones and the *Lost Crusade* star Sean Connery... **GARRICK HAGON** (Biggs Darklighter) appears with Harvey Keitel in *Taking Sides*... **CELIA IMRIE** (Bravo 5) co-stars in the British thriller *Dead in the Water*...

LIAM NEESON (Qui-Gon Jinn) narrates the *Imax* film *Journey into the Amazing Cave*, the latest from the makers of *Everest*. Neeson was also nominated for a Grammy Award in the same category as **JAMES EARL JONES** (Darth Vader's voice): Spoken Word Album for Children. Neeson was nominated for his reading of Chris Van Allsburg's *The Polar Express*, and Jones was honored for his reading of Susan Wojciechowski's *The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey*... Saga composer John Williams was also nominated for a Grammy this year, earning a nod in the category of Best Instrumental Composition for his theme for *Angela's Ashes*...

He's not George Lucas, but he's played him on screen. **MARTIN HYNES**, who played the title role in the successful short film parody *George Lucas in Love*, sold his comedy script *Honest Abe to Disney* for John Turteltaub (Disney's *The Kid*) to direct. Hynes also wrote and directed the upcoming independent feature *The Big Split*.

► CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

and a dealers room full of European memorabilia. A video program, online action, and costume competitions will complete the convention experience. Past Jedi-Cons have tended to be multilingual because guests come from all over Europe and even the U.S. This year, bookings have come from as far away as Japan. At presstime, 1,000 tickets have already been booked—twice the number as usual.

AMERICAN GRAFFITI TRIBUTE ADDS STAR POWER

Long before it became cool to give movies names beginning with the word *American* (like *American Beauty*, *Pie*, *Psycho*, *Movie*, and *Werewolf in London*), there was *American Graffiti*. George Lucas's first blockbuster, in *Insider* #52, we reported

that the American Film Institute had selected *American Graffiti* to be honored at its AFI Favorite Film Series at the U.S. Comedy Arts Festival in Aspen, Colorado on March 3. As this issue went to press, the list of attendees to this "American Graffiti Reunion" began to come together, with more participants still possible.

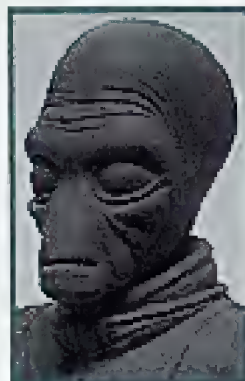
George Lucas heads the list of those scheduled to appear, along with his co-screenwriters Gloria Katz & Willard Huyck, both of whom also contributed key lines of dialogue to the original *Star Wars*. Of the 1973 film's celebrated ensemble cast, Bo Hopkins, Kathleen Quinlan, Candy Clark, Charles Martin Smith, Cindy Williams, Mackenzie Phillips, and Paul LeMat were among those joining Lucas for the reunion. We'll have full coverage of this event in the next *Insider*.

DUROS DEBUTS AS HASBRO FAN FIGURE

Out of the whole cantina full of aliens, it was Ellorrs Madak, the distinctive Duros with the concerned gaze, who was chosen by fans to join the elite ranks of *Star Wars* characters immortalized in plastic as a Hasbro action figure. Following polls here (*Star Wars Insider* #48) and online at starwars.com and Hasbro's Web site, Madak was chosen by collectors as the first Fan Choice Figure.

If you're not sure who Ellorrs Madak is, he's the bald, big-eyed dude in the corner with his smuggling partner Baniss Keeg, watching as Dr. Evazan knocks Luke onto the floor. He looks kind of like a Neimoidian from Episode I.

For fans interested in watching the evolution of the Fan Choice Figure, check out the ongoing updates at starwars.hasbro.com/bountyhunter/fanchoice.cfm. Ellorrs Madak is due to hit stores later in 2001.



JEDI JUSTICE

ON A LAWLESS PLANET

STAR WARS

Qui-Gon & Obi-Wan

LAST STAND ON ORD MANTELL

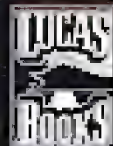
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DARK FOR

He was Senator Palpatine in

The Phantom Menace and the

Emperor in Return of the Jedi.

Now, in an exclusive Insider

interview, Ian McDiarmid

talks about bridging the gap as

Supreme Chancellor Palpatine

in Episodes II and III of the

Star Wars saga.

an interview with

IAN MCDIARMID • SUPREME

CE RISING



by Scott Chernoff
E CHANCELLOR PALPATINE



In Episode I, then Senator Palpatine (Ian McDiarmid) confers with Queen Amidala (actress Natalie Portman) prior to her remarks to the Galactic Senate.

When Darth Vader first burst on the scene in 1977, storming into the Rebel Blockade Runner amid smoke, stormtroopers, and blaster fire, it was impossible to think of him as anything but the ultimate villain of *Star Wars*. It seemed there could be no soul darker, no mind more evil, no heart more cold.

That was before we met the Emperor.

As Darth Vader himself put it, "The Emperor is not as forgiving as I am."

Sure enough, in *Return of the Jedi*, we learned quickly that Vader was but a pawn in his master's dark game of galactic domination. The Emperor, from the moment he first touched down on Death Star II, made it clear that it was he who was in charge all along. By the end, we saw that Vader could actually be a hero, and that the ultimate villain of the *Star Wars* saga was a hunched-over old man with piercing yellow eyes, black robes, and a distinctively chilling voice.

To pull off the crucial role of the Emperor (who first appeared briefly as a hologram voiced by Clive Revill in *The Empire Strikes Back*), George Lucas and *Jedi* director Richard Marquand turned to Ian McDiarmid, a charismatic British stage actor then in his mid-30s. McDiarmid sunk his teeth into his first major film role, emerging from marathon make-up sessions to create a modern day icon of cinematic evil.

No wonder that 16 years later, Lucas again enlisted McDiarmid to play a young Senator Palpatine in *Star Wars: Episode I The Phantom Menace*, making him one of the few performers from the classic trilogy to reprise his character in the prequels.

Once again drawing on a tremendous reservoir of experience in the theatre, McDiarmid (who in the meantime had also appeared in the Frank Oz-directed comedy *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* and the Oscar-nominated *Restoration*) played Palpatine as a smooth charmer who manages to maneuver Chancellor Valorum out of office, and himself in, even as his home planet of Naboo is under siege, and all with a smile on his face and a spring in his step.

Naturally, McDiarmid returns for Episode II, luxuriating in his character's new position as Supreme Chancellor and looking forward to continuing his rise in Episode III. No longer the new kid on the block, McDiarmid is now a *Star Wars* vet and fan favorite from both the classic and prequel eras.

In between filming Episodes I and II, the Scottish-born actor, an early drama school classmate of Denis Lawson (Wedge), took a role in Tim Burton's blockbuster *Sleepy Hollow* (with *Star Wars* actors Christopher Lee and Ray Park) and continued to focus on running the Almeida Theatre, the thriving and popular North London playhouse where he serves as joint artistic director with Jonathan Kent. The duo were awarded the Theatrical Achievement of the Year award by London's *Evening Standard* in 1998 for their work trans-

forming the once-obscure playhouse into one of the region's most acclaimed theatres.

McDiarmid was staring at the Almeida as Prospero in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* when the insider caught up with him. The production was the last at the theatre before a 14-month renovation project, during which time the Almeida will continue to produce plays at a converted bus station across town.

The last time we interviewed McDiarmid (*Insider* #37), Episode I hadn't come out yet, and we had tons of questions about *Return of the Jedi*. But this time, the first thing we wanted to talk about was Episode II—even though so much about the story is still top secret.

Let's get this out of the way right off the bat. There is a lot about your work in the prequels that we can't talk about yet. Why is it necessary to keep so much about Palpatine a mystery?

The principal answer to that, of course, is that he is a man of mystery. That is how he exercises, maintains, and increases his power—by choosing what he's public about. He's the great political manipulator of all time.

I found it interesting in Episode I to watch the wheels turning in Senator Palpatine's mind. We sense he's up to no good, yet we never see him actually do anything sinister.

Yes, that's probably the most interesting aspect of the part for me. Palpatine appears to be a hard-working politician—and when you say the word politician, immediately you think

PALPATINE—
"HE IS A MAN OF MYSTERY"
"HE'S THE GREAT
POLITICAL MANIPULATOR
OF ALL TIME."

about equivocation, which is the nature of the job. But at the same time, I know that underneath all that is an evil soul. The undercurrents are always there in his mind and in his gut.

Everything he does is an act of pure hypocrisy, and that's interesting to play.

I suppose it's rather like playing Iago. All the characters in the play—including Othello until the end—think that "Honest Iago" is a decent guy doing his job, and he's quite liked. But at the same time there's a tremendous evil subconscious in operation.

How do you as an actor convey trustworthiness to the characters around Palpatine while simultaneously signaling to the audience not to trust him?

I suppose that, in a sense, he is hyper-sincere—defensively sincere. He is a supreme actor. He has to be even more convincing than somebody who isn't behaving in a schizophrenic fashion, so he's extra charming, or extra professional—and for those who are looking for clues, that's almost where you can see them. He's super-sincere.

There's a moment in one scene of the new film where tears almost appear in his eye. These are crocodile tears, but for all those in the movie, and perhaps watching the movie itself, they'll see he is apparently moved—and of course, he is. He can just do it. He can, as it were, turn it on. And I suppose for him, it's also a bit of a turn-on—the pure exercise of power is what he's all about. That's the only thing he's interested in and the only

thing that can satisfy him—which makes him completely fascinating to play, because it is an evil soul. He is more evil than the devil. At least Satan fell—he has a history, and it's one of revenge.

But the Emperor—well, I don't know all the details, but who does of the Sith?—is an independent agent who just lives for the exercise of power. He doesn't know what scruples are, let alone have any. The only emotion that manifests itself truly is the one seen just before he meets his end, if that's what he meets, in Jedi—and then that's pure anger, when he realizes that he hasn't succeeded in manipulating young Skywalker. So he has to kill him, and he tries to do that with unadulterated fury.

He has no sorrow about his mistakes, just pure anger?

Just anger. And his great strength is that he's not fearful, which of course is also young Skywalker's great strength, and ultimately Vader's too. It's understanding both sides of fear—how it's important not to be fearful in order to not stop yourself from doing things you believe and know to be right. At the same time, it's on the dark side—terror is what he specializes in. It's what motivates him and governs his every action—his understanding of the nature of terror. He believes that everybody can be terrorized, or seduced by one thing or another.

But he's ultimately proven wrong.



Actor Ian McDiarmid stars as Prospero in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* at the thriving Almeida Theater in North London.

Yes, he is, but not until the end of the movie, at the very critical moment—as he succeeded with the father, will he succeed with the son? And he doesn't, because the father refuses to let him succeed with the son—which is what makes it fascinating.

Did you ever sit down and discuss Palpatine's backstory with George Lucas?

No, not really. But it's what I feel to be true about the part—and by and large, I think it's the same instinct that George has responded to.

But as George says, the fans always know what's going on because they've absorbed the story in all its detail. You can sort of work it out. The story hasn't changed. It's a story George set out to tell when he made Episode IV all those years ago, and now he's just telling it.

Do you know for sure whether you're doing Episode III?

Yes, I will be doing Episode III, and that is now a fact.

That's comforting to know.

Yes, I'm pleased about that.

Palpatine, on his way to ever-greater power, tells young Anakin Skywalker (actor Jake Lloyd) in a chilling foreshadowing of things to come, "We will watch your career with great interest," as Obi-Wan Kenobi (actor Ewan McGregor) looks on in Episode I.



Has he given you a specific idea about how Palpatine will evolve in Episode III?

He's always said that Episode III will be the darkest. George feels people won't necessarily like it because of that, but my feeling is the reverse. I think they'll like it even more, because I think people are fascinated by the whole dark side of the saga. That's why Vader is so interesting. He's complicated, as we later find out. It's that apparently seductive darkness that fascinates people. They want to know more about it. They're not attracted by evil, but they're attracted by the nature of it. It's a very interesting thing to observe.

Why do you think people are so intrigued by evil characters?

I don't know, but I think it might go back to your initial question—because it's mysterious. It's underneath. Milton, when he created Satan in *Paradise Lost*, which is one of the greatest creations in all of literature, made Satan as evil as Satan should be. But at the same time, Milton found him sympathetic as a soul in torment—his best poetic writing is for that character.

But that's not the case with the Emperor, which makes it so interesting. He doesn't have any of those potentially redemptive qualities. He hasn't fallen. I imagine he's evil from birth, which is a terrible thing to imagine. He's not human.

So he has no awareness of how different he is from other people?

No—no conscience, none of these things. He's untrammelled by humanity, by any feelings of guilt or responsibility or any of these things that bother all of us to a degree. And that's why, up to a point, he's entirely able to exercise his will. Of course, he's immensely clever, too.

When you were shooting Episode II, were you thinking about how you were going to evolve the character from film to film?

I don't really think about this. I play the lines, in the hope that something will emerge that'll be interesting and useful to the movie. That's what you do between action and cut, in these short bursts that are called scenes. But that's what acting is—it's about responding to the moment. And then you abandon it to George—but that's one of the things I like about film. It's the opposite from the theatre. You surrender your performance for other people to choose bits from, whereas in the theatre, you're in control of the whole part, every evening, and the director moves to one side. It's neither better nor worse—they're just different experiences, and I find them equally fascinating.

How has Palpatine—now the Supreme Chancellor—changed between Episode I and Episode II?

Well, we're about 10 years on from Episode I, so he's had a chance to get on with it. Of course, his status has obviously gone up, because his office is better. The power has now manifested itself. His office—through the windows, there will be lots of stuff added later on—was a big set, a real power base.

The costumes, too, have got much more edge to them, I think, than the mere Senator had. So we see the trappings of power. And I'm also slightly aged. In the last film, I had a fairly standard make-up on, but now, they're starting to crinkle my face.

I'm sure it was still easier than the make-up you were under for *Return of the Jedi*.

Yes—that was a four-hour job, initially, although we got it down to about two-and-a-half in the end. But this was just a little bit of latex here and there, a little bit of skin-scrunching.

The last time we spoke (*Insider* #37), we talked a lot about *Return of the Jedi*. So this time, I'm just wondering, nearly 20 years later, what sticks out most in your mind about your first *Star Wars* experience?

Actually, I looked at it again the other day, because I was watching the re-issue of the three videos, and I thought, "Oh God, there's such a young person underneath all that."

I have nothing but happy memories, because, as you know, it just happened out of the blue. I met George and I didn't know what the part was or what I'd be required to do, because it was very secretive in those days. I just knew that he was called the Emperor, which didn't sound bad. And I was right. I also remember I liked that chair.

What can you tell us about your latest *Star Wars* experience on Episode II? I understand you were in the first scene shot.

Well, the script came to us quite late, but I knew I was going to be in the first scenes because of the nature of the scheduling. I wondered if it might be because I was in the first scene shot

Supreme Chancellor Palpatine speaks to the Galactic Senate, currently a sea of bluescreen. Photo by Sue Adler.



for Episode I, or if it was coincidence, but indeed I was in the first filmed scene of Episode II.

There I was, with this new but absolutely committed and fantastic Australian crew, on that first day. Of course, everyone was properly nervous. I, at least, knew what it was like to stand on a pod against blue screen because I'd done that in *Leavesden* [for Episode I]. But I didn't know what it was like to stand in the Supreme Chancellor's pod, because that belonged to Terence Stamp in the last movie—so that was new.

We had a whole 12-hour day of filming, two scenes, on me, with a lot of speeches to do. So I had a bit of an opportunity to re-familiarize myself with [the character]. In a highly pressured context because it was the first day, with a completely new crew. It was scary, but it was also exciting. Quite often, when the atmosphere is like that, when a lot is demanded of you, you sometimes find you have a little more in yourself than you thought you had. I hope that was true of me on the first day.

You had to rise to that occasion.

Yes—quite literally, because I was so many feet up in the air!

What was the mood like on that first day of shooting Episode II?

Well, it was very good, but I had the supreme advantage of being familiar with the set and knowing George and Rick and most of the team. But like everyone else, I didn't know the Australian crew, and they of course didn't know George because he had not long arrived. So they didn't really know what to expect, and they were, as usual, thinking, "Oh my God, it's *Star Wars*," as everybody does.

But it was a great, practical day, and we got everything done that we needed to do. They work very hard—that's the way Rick runs it and the way George likes to work, and I don't think it's a bad thing. You really do pump it out over a short period. The pressure is there all the time. But I like that—I always work better under that kind of pressure.

It seemed like, despite the pressure, everybody on the set was very friendly.



Supreme Chancellor Palpatine sits in a familiar-looking chair in his Coruscant Senate office, while aide Sly Moore (actress Sandi Finley) keeps a respectful distance in a scene from *Star Wars: Episode II*. Photo by Sue Adler.

Oh, yes. The atmosphere was great, and it was terrific being in Australia. I'd never been to Australia before. It was a big difference from being down the road in London, but *Star Wars* and Australia go together very well. There's something about the whole atmosphere there. The people are terrific—they're so full of life, and they have a highly developed sense of the absurd, which always helps.

How long were you in Sydney?

I was out for a period of just under a month initially, and then I went back to do another scene a few weeks later. So I was there for about five weeks in all.

You mentioned the script coming in at the last minute for Episode II. How much time did you have with it before you started shooting?

Well, the script was very late indeed. I arrived in Sydney on a Wednesday, and I was given the script when I got off the plane. There wasn't one available before that. And then we were shooting on Monday. I thought, inevitably, it

will be in the Senate, and I'll have some long speeches, and that was indeed the case.

Does it affect your acting when you don't have much time to refine your performance?

Everybody likes to get it as soon as possible so they can immerse themselves in it, but I knew the situation. I was staying in a friend's apartment who wasn't there, so I had the peace and quiet to work on it over those few days, which is what I did.

What did you think of the script when you finally got it?

I liked it very much. George had always said that Episode II would be a love story, and it has a real sort of courtly delicacy about it. The whole relationship between Padmé and Anakin is very moving and delicately done, but it's also quite passionate. It's a strong relationship and a strong attraction that they have, and that's present in the script.

Episode I was the introduction, the grand overture to the whole project. Episode II is the big step of the story, when they get together and when Anakin learns. He's a great and fast learner and has a tremendous instinct. He grows up very quickly, perhaps too quickly.

When you first read the script, was there anything in there where you thought, "Oh, I can't wait to do this?"

EMPEROR—
"HE IS UNTRAMMELED BY
HUMANITY. BY ANY
FEELINGS OF GUILT OR
RESPONSIBILITY."

IAN MCDIARMID: SUPREME CHANCELLOR PALPATINE

Yes. I could see how the character had developed. He wasn't seeking a power base—he had one. So there was the whole notion of being able to enjoy that and use that fact to take things further. In the previous film, I had to try and persuade people, but now he's more at home and more centered, and he has to do less. That doesn't mean to say that he doesn't go about things in a persuasive way.

Was there anything unique about shooting Episode II, or was it just business as usual for *Star Wars*?

It was nice to be able to have more to do with some of the characters—for example, to have a scene with Sam Jackson. And to be in the same movie as Christopher Lee—that's almost an ambition realized, as far as I'm concerned, because I think he's one of the two aristocrats of screen menace, along with Peter Cushing. I like to think I've picked up a few tips from him over the years. His *Dracula*—I'm sure he's sick to death of hearing about it—is one of the great cinematic creations.

He's a terrific man, charming and amusing and highly sophisticated. I think he's particularly pleased to be in the movie because Peter Cushing, who was his good friend and working partner for so many years, was in the original *Star Wars* movie. I think that's somehow appropriate and quite moving.

What was your first impression of Hayden Christensen, the new Anakin Skywalker?

I watched a rehearsal he had with George and Natalie, and I could see immediately that he is a fine actor. It was also immediately apparent that they had a real acting rapport and chemistry. It was great to see Natalie again, too, because she's so wise. That's the word I always think of with Natalie. She's not very old, but she has a maturity that I really admire.

To me, one of the greatest little moments in the last film was your brief encounter with Anakin—and it was one of the last scenes shot, just a couple months before Episode I was released. Did you take as

much delight in playing that scene as your character took in telling Anakin—that he'd be watching his career "with great interest?"

Yes, the scene with Palpatine and Anakin. I tried not to put too much into that. George said, "Just say it," and of course, he's quite right. Knowing what it really means, it takes care of itself. And once again, the character was being charming—a boy had served his planet well, and he was acknowledging it, and that was it.

I think George had originally thought that we shouldn't meet, and then having seen it all together, he thought that we should recognize each other, but just in a casual way. We filmed that one Saturday morning, very much later, and then I went to do some ADR [additional dialogue recording] work in the afternoon.

Did you notice any difference in George as a director from Episode I to Episode II?

I suppose just an increasing sense of relaxation. I know he initially hadn't decided that he was going to direct both II and III, but he did say during I that he was really enjoying working with the actors. As far as I'm concerned, it's entirely preferable, because then you have a direct line, as it were. Also, he doesn't say very much, and I like that too, because what he does say then is entirely specific. That's helpful, because the more specific a director can be, the more helpful he is.

You also recently worked with Tim Burton on *Sleepy Hollow*. What was that like?

It was the same kind of atmosphere. Tim—and George is like this too—would see something

that happened, or that you were doing, and go for more of that. So it was a process that was always evolving. It wasn't as if you were just filming a preconceived storyboard. You did feel that it was happening in the moment, which is when acting is really good. You feel that each take could be something fresh.

Sleepy Hollow brought you back to Leavesden Studios, where you shot *The Phantom Menace* with much of the same crew. But how was making *Sleepy Hollow* different from shooting *Star Wars*?

It was nice to play a character who was completely different from the Emperor. I like to play a character with fear. Poor Dr. Lancaster, he's always in a state of terror—and he has good reason to be, because they've all behaved badly and they're waiting to be found out. He was corroded by guilt. He couldn't be farther away from the Emperor, who doesn't know the word—he knows about corrosion, but he doesn't know about guilt.

It was also interesting because there were enormous sets in that film. There was a whole forest in Leavesden as opposed to just sections, which we would have had in *Star Wars*. There was some blue screen, but not much. They built the whole village, which was truly spectacular. It looked very theatrical—I kept thinking, "There are so many plays we could do on this great forest set." So from that point of view, it was completely different. But in its own way, the production design was as exciting as *Star Wars*.

Does having the set there in its entirety make a difference when you're acting?

It doesn't. They're terrific to look at, but you're always filming in small sections anyway. Movies are always done in small nuggets, and everything in front of you is a kind of chaos—it's machines and people staring, and willing it to be right, and doing their best to make it right. Sets on movies, to me, are always about small contained areas. So it doesn't matter whether something's going to be filled in behind you later or whether it's the actual thing. It's a tiny corner of order

DR. LANCASTER—
"HE IS CORRODED BY
GUILT. HE COULDN'T BE
FARTHER AWAY FROM
THE EMPEROR."

among the chaos, and that's one of the things I like about movies. Because if the camera moved two inches to one side, you would see how absurd it all was. You just have people standing there scratching their heads or chewing gum.

I hear that your current stage production of *The Tempest* has nearly movie-level special effects. Is it true you've got rain coming down, and you're kind of destroying the stage and not really worrying about the damage?

Yes, well, we have some renovation work to do on the theatre. Part of the project is we need a new stage and we had to raise the roof. So we thought that this was the perfect play to go out on, because as you know from *The Tempest*, Ariel should fly, and we thought it would be great if he could not only fly but swim.

So the whole of the stage is a giant water tank. It doesn't look like that to begin with—it looks as if we just put some water on the stage and built a pond, but we haven't. We've sunk it. There's a wonderful moment when Ariel actually dives in and swims, and the audience thinks, "Why hasn't he hit his chin?" We make it look as if it's very shallow and then he completely disappears. We can almost do it like the movies, but in theatrical terms. We can make people gasp, and I'm happy to say they do.

We're on until the theatre closes down, and I wish we could do it more. Various people have said, "Why don't you come and do it here?" And we say, "OK, but you've got to take your floor out and put a giant water tank in." And they go, "Oh, well, maybe not." It's a one-opportunity show—unless there are other theatres in a state of partial renovation.

In the last few years, you've guided the Almeida to become a major theatrical force in London. How do you decide which projects to take on?

For this tiny theatre in North London, we've always tried to re-invent ourselves. Once you do something people seem to like, we think not, "How can we do that again?" but, "How can we do something different?" The happiest



A withering glance from the Supreme Chancellor should be enough to silence any critic. Photo by Sue Adler.

sight really is on the final performance of a show. It's sometimes sad, but as you're watching the set come out, at the same time you're watching another new set come in. And it's that process of always going on to the next thing that I think is the essence of theatre.

Do you ever have time to relax?

Well, I had a few days in Australia. That was quite nice. I had a week between filming and I went to Melbourne, so that was a week. As far as possible, I try and keep Sundays free to do very little, or nothing. But I feel if I had too long to relax, I'd stop. The body would wind down, and I wouldn't be able to wind it up again. I understand why George can't wait to get into the editing suite, because although it's intense, it's also relaxing, because it's what you want to do.

Star Wars has been so popular for so long. Do you think it's something that will remain in people's minds for years to come?

I think it's entered the general consciousness. Just listening to kids talk about *The Phantom Menace*, and seeing them respond, one does feel that, as George has always hoped, this is a myth that will continue and which succeeding generations will take different things from. I'm confident about that. It's a great story, and that's always what does it to people. A great story is what we need.

You mentioned kids who were into *The Phantom Menace*. Since Episode I, are you recognized more on the street than you were before?

I'm happy to say not nearly as much as I thought. Yes, people come up now and again, but I can still go on public transport, which I quite like doing. Most people who do come up to me say, "It can't be." To which I say, "I guess you're right—it can't, it isn't." And they say, "Oh, OK, sorry." Now, of course, the minute I open my mouth, they recognize the voice. Then they realize, but by that time, I've gone onto another tube.

I was once chased through a tube station. They were saying, "You've got to stop, you're the Emperor, you've got to stop." And I managed to run faster than them. They only wanted my autograph—it wasn't anything sinister. I thought, "This is ridiculous—why didn't I just stop and give my autograph and move on?" But it had gone too far by then.

So when you're not running from autograph seekers, or running a theatre, you're on call for possible Episode II pick-up shooting and looking forward to Episode III?

Yes, if it's needed, I'll be very happy to go. And I'm certainly looking forward to Episode III, but that's a while away. I'm looking forward to what must inevitably happen in Episode II—and let's say no more than that. ☺

GETTING TO THE T O OVER TWO DECADES OF GALAXIES & GUM BY MICHAEL G. RYAN STAR WARS TR

Every Walgreen's or Ben Franklin drugstore located anywhere near a schoolyard prepared itself for the 3 P.M. rush. Kids, free from school, streamed inside and emptied pockets full of loose change onto the countertop.

Black-and-blue wax wrappers featured a blurry drawing of C-3PO beneath the Star Wars logo. The dusty pink gum inside could have performed an effective tonsillectomy. But the sixty-six blue-bordered movie photos of Luke, Han, Leia, Ben, the droids, and Vader were worth the risk.

Star Wars had finally come to trading cards. The back of each card featured a movie fact, a story summary, or a part of one of the set's two puzzles (either the film's poster or a shot of the heroes in the cockpit of the Millennium Falcon).

And that was just the first set.

of cards could sustain more sets."

The first *Star Wars* film ran for five successful sets of cards, totaling 330 cards and 55 stickers. Later *Star Wars* sets included behind-the-scenes filming shots, publicity photos of the principal characters, cantina alien shots ("Lucasfilm had held off printing the cantina shots for a while," says Gerani, "That's why they don't appear in the earlier sets"), and the infamous Threepio picture, card #207, from the fourth set that has since become quite the collector's item.

1977— "CHARLIE'S ANGELS WAS HOT THAT YEAR, TOO.... IT WAS A RACE T

A LONG TIME AGO...

That initial set of *Star Wars* trading cards in 1977 was a hit for Topps, which had previously published film and TV tie-ins without anything like the sort of phenomenal success

that *Star Wars* brought to the company.

"*Charlie's Angels* was hot that year, too," recalls Gary Gerani, editor of the *Star Wars* trading cards for many years, beginning with the first release. "It was a race to see which set

"It was a standard shot of Threepio," Gerani says. "I used to go down to Lucasfilm in California—this was when they were still in a trailer across from Universal, when they were still something of a ragtag operation—

BOTTOM OF THE TRADING CARDS

and I picked out a photo of Threepio to go into the next set. It was just one of dozens of small slide shots. Well, it wasn't long before I started getting calls, asking 'Gary, what's up with this photo you selected?' 'Why?' I asked. 'What's wrong with it?'

Clearly, someone had been clowning with the Threepio costume on the set, according to Gerani, and thought it would be funny to attach a... provocative body part to Threepio as a joke. The droid appeared sexually aroused.

caption was something simple and unoffending: 'C-3PO (Anthony Daniels)'. Can you imagine... if the caption had been, 'Threepio gets a new idea?'

By the time the first five sets had run their course, the folks at Topps were, in fact, nearly out of imagery. The second film came along just in time for the designers and editors to start over again with all new pictures. The three sets based on *The Empire Strikes Back* in 1980 however, ended up having more cards and more stickers than the original sets.

never lost sight of the concerns of their licensees like Topps.

"Because he's a fan of comics and cards, he knows how to address the concerns of the folks in those businesses," Gerani says.

This didn't keep Lucasfilm from being a bit conservative with their next feature. "I saw the script before *Empire* was out," Gerani remembers, "and at first, we were told that we wouldn't be allowed to use Yoda at all in the first series of cards. They wanted to hold him back to use him as a big surprise."

TO SEE WHICH SET OF CARDS WOULD SUSTAIN MORE SETS." — GARY GERANI

But before Topps could stop it, the card had gone out to the public. Subsequent printings contained an airbrushed version of the offending imagery.

"Thank goodness," Gerani says, "that the

By then the people at Lucasfilm, particularly George Lucas, knew what a phenomenon they had on their hands. According to Gerani, who traveled to California to prepare for the next wave of cards, Lucas and company

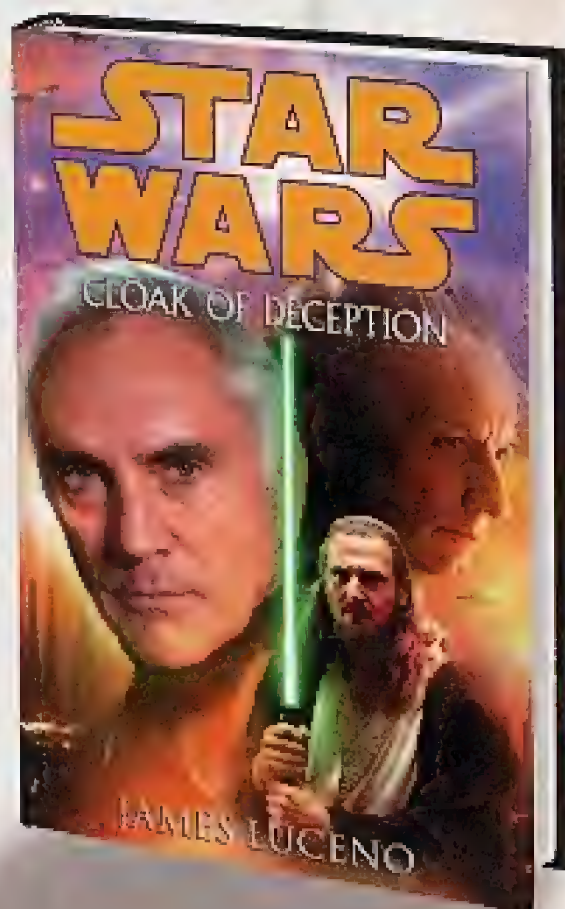
"They ultimately changed their minds," he says, "but interestingly enough, the script I read had deliberately left out the moment when Darth Vader tells Luke, 'I am your father.' I was

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 44

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the Jawa TRADER

VOLUME 53

THE LAST TWO ISSUES of the Jawa Trader featured merchandise that was unavailable through the Star Wars Fan Club. We, the online store customer service staff, realize the trouble this has created and apologize.

Insider experienced a tricky transition to its new home at Wizards of the Coast. Because of the long silence you had to endure, we decided to prioritize getting issues out to you as quickly as possible.

Unfortunately, that created supply problems within the Jawa Trader. Sometimes we had to get an issue out before we knew the limits of our inventory. We knew what we wanted to have, but we weren't always able to realize it for you. We are working hard to correct the problems, and we expect the major issues to be cleared up by the time you read this.

In this issue, we've done some reorganizing. You might not find the selection you want just yet, but as we move forward, we are confident that the items advertised in the Jawa Trader will be available for you to purchase (unless we sell out at the last second...) online or through the 1-800-TRUE-FAN number, or regular mail order.

Again, we offer our sincerest apologies. Now, on to the exciting stuff!

—Online Store Customer Service Staff

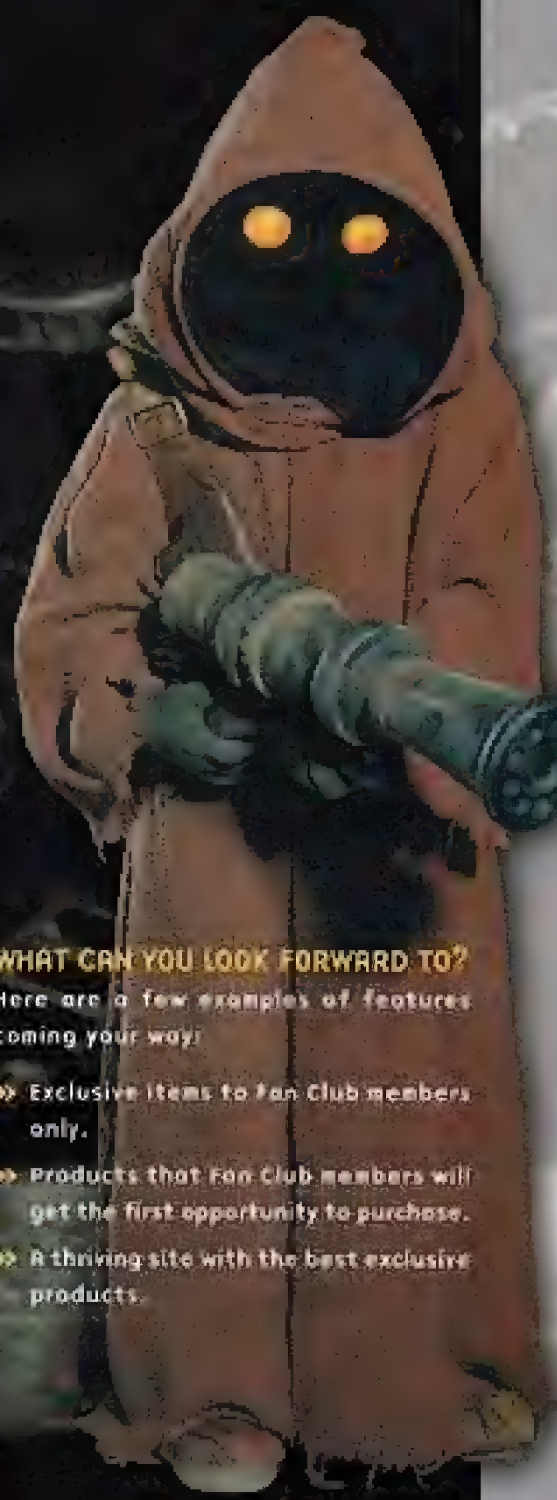
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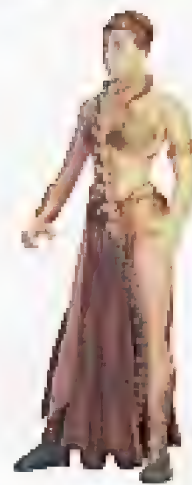
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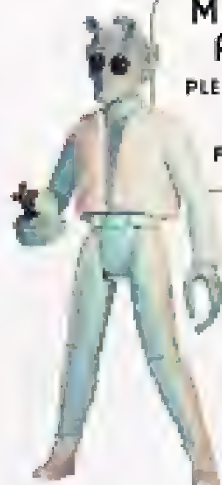
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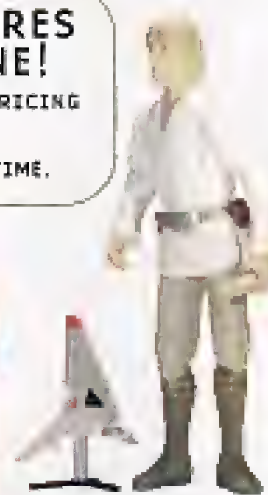
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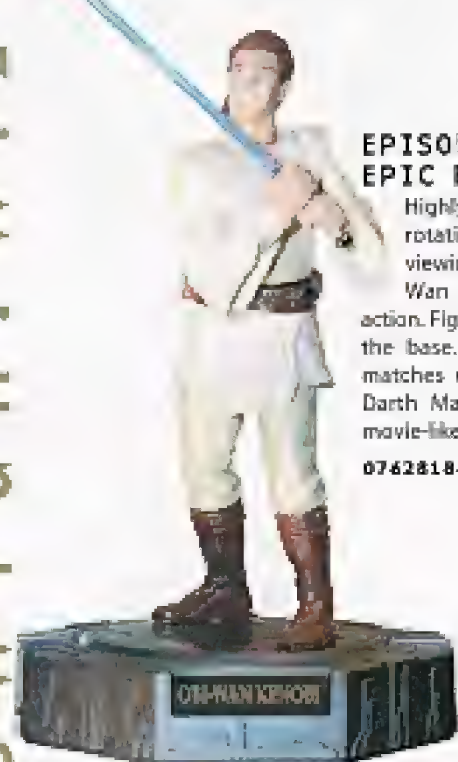


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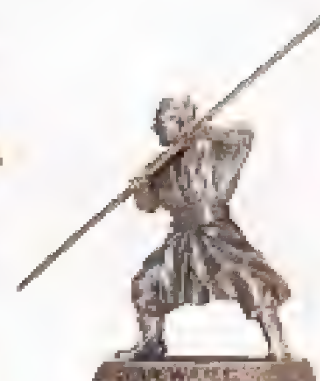
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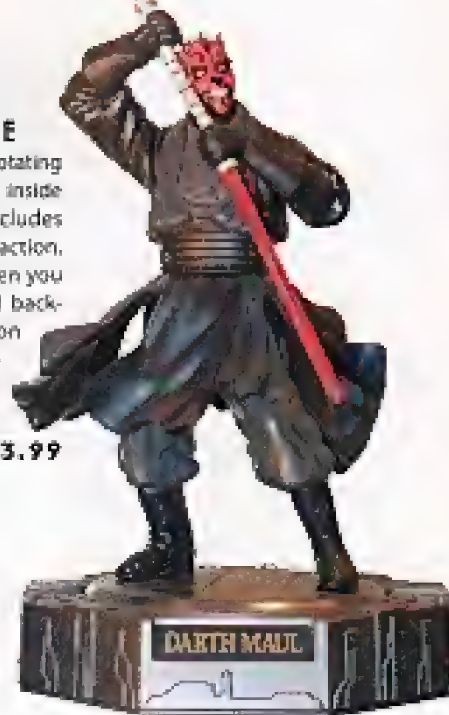
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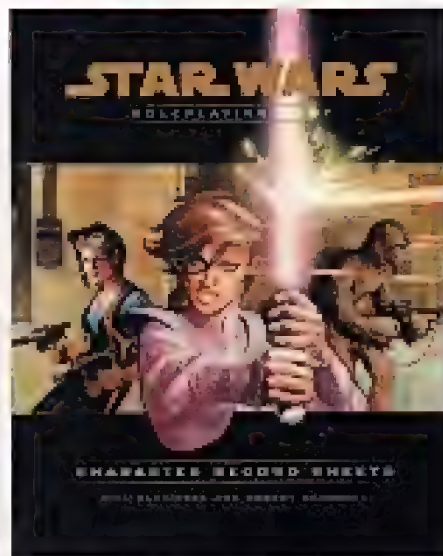
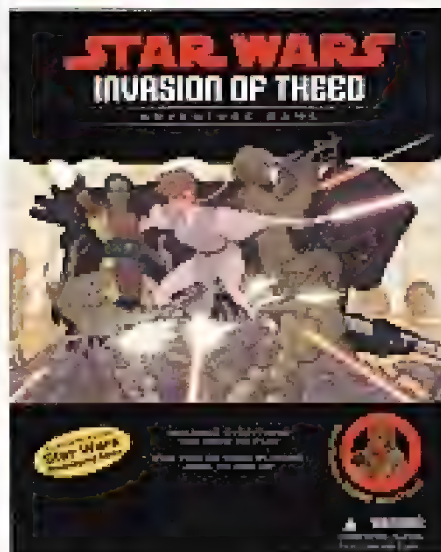
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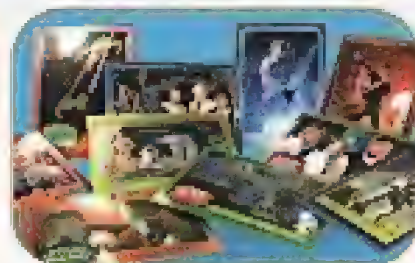
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DARTH MAUL'S LIGHTSABER

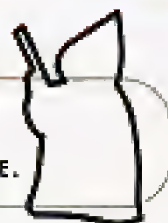
Darth Maul's lightsaber has a double-sided hilt and the blades light up with the touch of a button. Lightsaber extends over 5 feet total and has crashing battle sounds. Requires 4 AA batteries.

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» CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

just as surprised as anyone when I saw that on the big screen. It was a real treat to still be amazed." As a result, the first set of cards completely sidesteps Vader's confession to Luke... because even Topps didn't know about it yet!

At about the same time, Topps released a set of thirty *Empire* "Giant Photo Cards." These 5" x 7" cards were color movie stills or publicity shots of the main characters, a few

mini-posters in the set being *Star Wars* and *Empire*. (The other films in the series ranged from *Smokey and the Bandit* to *Rocky* to *The Blue Lagoon*.) Completists might want to seek these out as part of the overall *Star Wars* trading card collection, as these were sold just like trading cards, right down to the gum!

Finally, with the release of *Return of the Jedi* cards in 1983, Topps concluded its collection of trading cards based on the films with two

"one factor we considered was that the 15th anniversary of the film was coming up, and Lucasfilm was very interested in commemorating that occasion. We checked around to see what else was being done to support it, but there wasn't much. No fast food tie-ins or major toy lines, but we did detect a strong uptick of interest in *Star Wars*, particularly in the comic industry. There was good buzz about the films, and all we needed was



So the first set of Star Wars trading cards was a much different

the reintroduced version of the "propaganda"



C-3PO (Anthony Daniels)



Star Wars Galaxy delivered a new kind of Star Wars experience.

ships from the film, and the ever-popular AT-ATs. These larger cards were fairly popular and easily obtained. Many fans used them as "mini-posters" instead of standard trading cards and thus, they were preserved from mishandling. Collectors can still probably find complete sets in good condition.

The officially released version of the cards had both a text and a visual checklist on the backs—miniature versions of cards 1–15 on the first half, and 16–30 on the second half of the set. An early market-testing version of these cards had a different back: a text-only checklist. The test version is the hot one to collect of course, and are much more difficult to track down.

During this time, Topps also released its "Giant Movie Pin-Up" set, two of the twelve

more series, adding another wrinkle to the collector's market by putting two different colored backgrounds on the stickers in the first set. After nearly 1,000 cards and over 200 stickers, Topps stepped back from the *Star Wars* trading-card market for nearly a decade.

A NEW HOPE

When they started again, they did things differently. "What we had done before was primitive, very simple," Gerani concedes. "When we got back into the *Star Wars* universe, we realized how much more we could do."

Ira Friedman, Vice President of Entertainment Properties for Topps (who, ironically, ran the *Star Wars* Fan Club out of Los Angeles for Lucasfilm in the early 80s), remembers that

a good hook."

When Topps began to consider a new chapter of the *Star Wars* trading cards, that hook was the decision to use art instead of photos. They divided the art into three distinct categories: art used in creation of the films, art used in promotion of the films, and art inspired by the films.

The "inspired" art came from comic artists. Many had been kids when the first film came out. Now, they had the opportunity to be paid for contributing to a world they loved.

"It was an honor, a thrill, the chance of a lifetime for them to do something associated with *Star Wars*," says Friedman. "Our first set of *Star Wars* Galaxy cards allowed them to present their own visions in their own styles."

ARTISTS TO PRESENT THEIR OWN VISIONS IN THEIR OWN STYLES

Thus was born the first of the *Star Wars* Galaxy sets in 1993, ten years after the last series of Topps *Star Wars* cards had been released to the public. The new cards were an immediate hit. Fans could see poster art that they'd only heard about previously, as well as art by comic illustrators and a wide array of merchandising art.

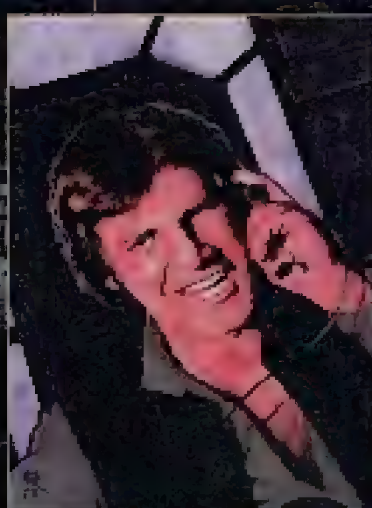
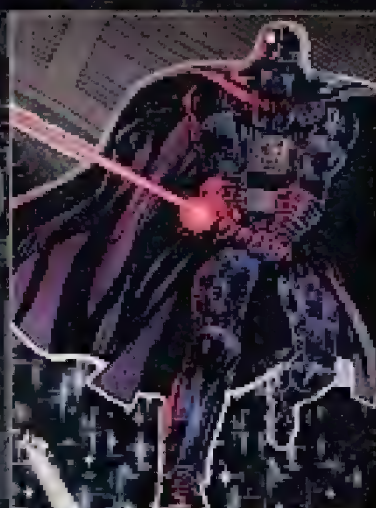
Since Topps first released *Star Wars* cards, trading cards had taken on a few new charac-

Finally, 28 of the *Star Wars* Galaxy I cards were available as promo cards if collectors bought Bend-Em *Star Wars* toys. These cards were exactly the same as cards contained in the Galaxy I set except that they had letters (A-Z, AA, and BB) instead of numbers.

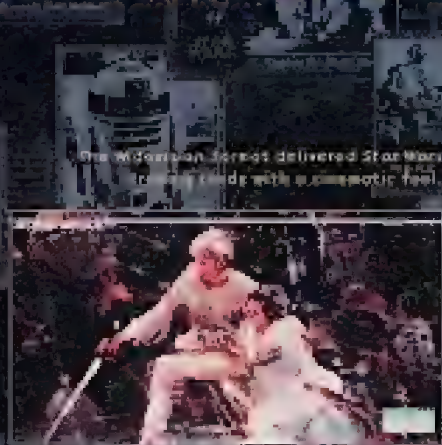
Star Wars Galaxy II followed up with more of the same, once again drawing on rare, unseen art or newly created art by comic book artists. The most interesting collectible

Other innovations followed: Ten "Topps Finest" chrome chase cards debuted, featuring concept paintings by Ralph McQuarrie. *Empire* and *Jedi* Widevision releases followed this same pattern, though *Jedi* featured one of its chase cards as a 3-D "case" card, as only one appeared in every case! Also, six of the *Star Wars* Widevision cards were given steel backs and issued as a separate collector's item. As if that weren't enough, a rare promo

Star Wars comic book artist John Walter Simonson provided the concept art for the *Star Wars* Galaxy chase cards.



This portrait of Han Solo appeared on both the Galaxy I set and *Star Wars* Widevision releases.



teristics. So-called "chase" and promotional cards were now highly sought-after by collectors, and *Star Wars* Galaxy I came with both—six chase cards and a handful of promos.

Topps also found another way to introduce collectible cards into the market when it issued a special factory set in a plastic reproduction of the *Millennium Falcon*. It contained a complete set of foil-stamped cards, a special Darth Vader 3-D hologram, and a promo card not found elsewhere (numbered "0" with artwork of Darth Vader by Ken Steacy).

To further challenge collectors, Topps offered a special mail-order binder for their cards. The binders came with yet another exclusive promo card, Grand Moff Tarkin and Darth Vader by Doug Medved.

to come from this set? Promo card P3. With art by John Rheaume, this card showed a handful of creatures—all Yoda-like—paying homage to a Yoda-like statue. Lucasfilm did not approve this promo for public release, though some copies are floating around now.

In 1995, Topps took trading cards in a whole new direction by introducing "Widevision" cards designed to give a sense of the greater scope that the three *Star Wars* films occupied on the screen. First up to bat: *Star Wars*. The fronts of these cards featured widescreen scenes from the films (including script-like information along the bottom), while the backs contained text descriptions of the scene, storyboards, additional stills from the scene, and character portraits.

card (Luke on his X-wing) was packaged with the *Star Wars* Widevision three-ring binder. "These were among my favorite sets," Gerani admits. "It was a new, different concept."

Finally, the third and final installment of the *Star Wars* Galaxy series was released in 1995. It had the unique appeal of having a "first day production" set that contained a small gold foil stamp in one corner to indicate the set's collectibility. The set also contained a brand-new subset of chase cards called "Clear Zone" cards. These six cards featured "Agents of the Empire"—bounty hunters—in the card's imagery (they were numbered 13-18). They were printed on see-through colored plastic. This final set of *Star Wars* Galaxy cards contained a set of 12

LucasArts cards featuring art from different computer games.

MASTERING THE FORCE

By now, Topps was just warmed up. MasterVision cards, officially released in 1996, continued the theme of the earlier *Star Wars Galaxy* cards, by presenting the artwork of some of the best *Star Wars* artists. While much of the artwork had been previ-

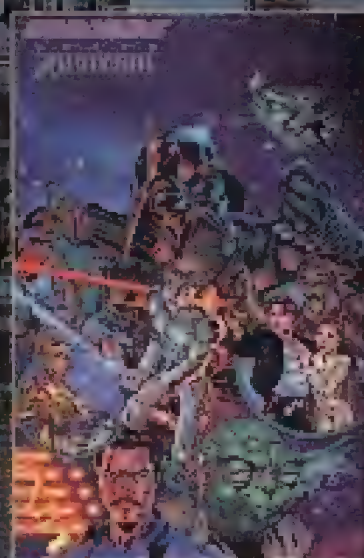
books, and comics.

Star Wars Finest: Characters came with six Refractor cards per box, that is, cards with gold backs and slightly more reflective fronts. Thus, it was possible to collect the entire set in both regular and Refractor format. The cards ended up being extremely expensive for most shops to sell however, causing the follow-up set (*Star Wars Finest: Vehicles*) to be changed

Topps had its hands full creating card sets around them.

In 1997, Topps created two sets to celebrate the Special Edition releases: one for retail outlets (like Target, Wal-Mart, and various toy stores) and one for "core" or hobby stores (such as card and game shops).

The retail version, sometimes called "Super Widevision Movie Cards," focused equally on all three Special Edition films.



Topps MasterVision format was easy to collect.



ously published, it shone more brightly than ever on the larger cards (6 1/2" x 10-3/15"). These cards were far more easily collected as well, due to clever packaging: All 36 cards were available in one box, so collectors didn't need to accumulate numerous duplicates in search of one elusive card. The card size of this series may have put some consumers off, however. The average collector might also have had trouble locating them since they tended to appear only in comic and card shops.

That year also saw the release of *Star Wars Finest: Characters*, the first of two "Finest" sets. The art on these cards was magnificent, as was the fleshed-out information about characters from the movies.

to a non-chromium format.

Rounding out 1996 was the *Shadows of the Empire* trading card set, based on the book by Steve Perry and featuring art by the brothers Tim and Greg Hildebrandt. *Shadows* had been a successful "bridging" novel, as well as a comic series and a video game. The Topps *Shadows* cards took on a unique numbering scheme by including the chase cards as part of the general numbering of the set (73-82) and adding two subsets (LucasArts and Dark Horse Comics material) to the last 11 cards.

ONE END OF THE GALAXY TO THE OTHER

Once the Special Edition films were released,

and had only six "Topps Laser" chase cards (Laser cards had holes cut in them to create a special illusion). These chase cards were different cards from the hobby set.

In contrast, the hobby version (often called "*Star Wars Trilogy Special Edition Widevision*") was gold-bordered and focused primarily on *A New Hope*, allocating only six cards each for the other two films. The hobby version had several different chase cards. Each box contained six "Topps Laser" cards, two hologram cards, and one "3-DI" card.

The term "3-DI" is short for "3-Dimensional Imagery," and Topps continued to push the envelope for trading cards in 1997 with a 63-card set composed entirely of 3-DI

cards. "We tried to imagine what the film might have looked like if it were in 3-D," says Gerani.

Topps had planned to release similar sets for *Empire* and *Jedi*, but both were cancelled, presumably due to cost. Damaged cards were also an issue, as factory errors left nicks or scratches on some cards, which Topps addressed with a limited-time replacement policy.

RE-RETURN OF THE JEDI

In May 1999, Topps released its last scheduled *Star Wars* set before starting on the prequels: the *Star Wars* Chrome Archives with 90 cards and 13 chase cards.

The *Star Wars* Chrome Archives set upgrades the original *Star Wars* cards released between 1977 and 1983. Those vintage cards were due for an overhaul, and

were in the Topps Widevision format, and included 80 cards that featured highlights from the film as well as character profiles. The big difference between the retail and hobby sets lay in the chase cards. The hobby set contained 8 chrome cards and 40 "foil-stamped" cards, which were similar to normal cards but with a blue border and a foil stamp in the corner. The retail cards contained 16 stickers and 10 mirror-board cards.



Despite drawbacks, the *Star Wars* 3-D set was a favorite among collectors. The single chase card in the set was a lenticular motion card featuring the destruction of the Death Star, which was extremely popular.

The follow-up *Star Wars* *Finest* set, *Star Wars: Vehicles*, was also released in 1997. As previously mentioned, it became non-chrome, but with 72 cards, four "Finest Cutaway" chase cards (each showing vehicle "blueprints"), and a two-card 3-D sheet which formed a complete image when placed side-by-side, the *Vehicles* set was still quite popular. The set also came with a card that could be redeemed for an uncut oversized card (the complete scene from the two 3-D cards when joined).

Topps did it in a big way: by applying Chrome technology to the original card images (30 images from each film). The result was a spectacular card set, including clear chrome cards (harkening back to the *Star Wars* Galaxy III cards) and double-sided chrome cards, the latter re-creating images from the original stickers on one side and an image of the original movie poster on the other.

For their first card set based on *The Phantom Menace*, Topps went all out. They released Episode I: Series One Widevision as both a retail and a hobby set (similar to the Special Edition releases of 1997).

Whereas those earlier sets looked completely different from one another, the Episode I sets were very similar. Both sets

Later in 1999, Topps followed up with a second series, again distributed in both hobby and retail version. The hobby version even called attention to itself on the wrapper (marked as "Hobby Edition"). Again, the sets contained 80 cards, and in the case of the hobby version, two different kinds of chase cards: embossed foil and chrome inserts. As if that weren't enough, they also included a 3-card set of oversized box cards (1 per sealed box). Also, unlike older sets, the second set of Episode I cards didn't pick up numbering where the preceding set left off. It began again with #1.

The retail version of the second set didn't include the oversized box cards, but contained lots of the same behind-the-scenes

photos of the stars, conceptual drawings, and other insider information, as well as completely different chase cards (though still in the same numbers).

Finally, Topps jumped into 2000 with its most impressive set of cards to date. The *Star Wars* Episode I 3-D cards continued to show why Topps is the leader in the field of trading cards. The 46 cards in the latest set are spectacular to behold—The *Phantom Menace* lends itself well to

Topps's unique 3-D style—and the two multi-motion chase cards are icing on the cake. Furthermore, collation is such that purchasing one box of 36 packs nearly ensures completing the entire set, a relief to many weary collectors.

NO, THERE IS ANOTHER...

Friedman hints that the next phase of *Star Wars* cards will be even bigger and better.

"We're in the preliminary planning stages of an all-new series that will link the original trilogy to Episode I," he says. "with strong focuses on the characters that appeared in the films."

More significantly, Friedman says that random packs will contain a rare treasure, "We're adding... original, authentic autographs from some of the people in the films," he reveals. "We think the fans will be receptive to this."

TOPPS STAR WARS TRADING CARDS

1977

Star Wars (Series 1, 66 cards, 11 stickers)
Star Wars (Series 2, 66 cards, 11 stickers)
Star Wars (Series 3, 66 cards, 11 stickers)
Star Wars (Series 4, 66 cards, 11 stickers)

1978

Star Wars (Series 5, 66 cards, 11 stickers)

1980

The Empire Strikes Back (Series 1, 132 cards, 33 stickers)
The Empire Strikes Back (Series 2, 132 cards, 33 stickers)
The Empire Strikes Back (Series 3, 88 cards, 22 stickers)
The Empire Strikes Back Giant Photo Cards (30 cards)

1983

Return of the Jedi (Series 1, 132 cards, 33 stickers)
Return of the Jedi (Series 2, 88 cards, 22 stickers)

1993

Star Wars Galaxy I (132 cards, 6 chase cards)
Star Wars Galaxy Millennium Falcon factory set
 (foil-stamped Galaxy set, promo # "D", Darth Vader hologram)
Star Wars Galaxy binder (SW81 promo)
Star Wars Galaxy I Bend-Em toys cards (28 cards from Galaxy set, lettered instead of numbered)

1994

Star Wars Galaxy II (132 cards, 6 chase cards)
Star Wars Galaxy II tin factory set (foil-stamped Galaxy II set, promo # "00", droids hologram)
Star Wars Galaxy binder (SW82 promo)

The next set of cards, currently scheduled for late summer, will appear primarily in hobby channels. Friedman promises that in addition to autographs, "we have a few other special surprises in mind." ☺

YOU HAVE LEARNED MUCH...

In addition to the many different sets of cards, Topps has also done numerous promos over the years. Its magazine *Star Wars Galaxy Collector* was a source for regular promo cards, for instance. To see a truly impressive documentation of the various cards available in all the different sets mentioned here, check out www.swcards.com—the depth of research at this *Star Wars* trading card site is unparalleled. If you've been thinking about trying to complete your Topps *Star Wars* card sets, this site will either completely dissuade you or give you the courage to take that first step into a much larger world....

WWW.SWCARDS.COM

TRADING CARDS, 1977–2000

1995

Star Wars Widevision (120 cards, 18 chase cards)
Star Wars Finest Widevision Steel Cards (5 chase)
The Empire Strikes Back Widevision
 (144 cards, 18 chase cards)

Return of the Jedi Widevision

114 cards, 10 chase cards, 1 of those 10 a "case" card!
Star Wars Galaxy III (90 cards, 12 LucasArts subject,
 6 chase cards, 6 Clear Zone cards)

1996

Star Wars MaskedVisions (36 cards)
Star Wars Finest: Characters (90 cards, 6 embossed,
 foil chase cards, 4 Matrix "case" cards)
Shadows of the Empire (90 cards, 18 chase cards)

1997

Star Wars Trilogy Super Widevision Movie Cards
 (72 cards), 2 holograms, 6 Laser chase cards
Star Wars Trilogy Special Edition Widevision
 (72 cards, 6 Laser chase cards)

1997 continued...

Star Wars 3-Dimensional Imagery Cards
 (63 cards, 1 chase card)
Star Wars Finest: Vehicles (72 cards, 4 "Focus-
 Cutaway" chase cards, 2 3-D chase cards)

1999

Star Wars Chrome Archives (50 cards, 2 clear chrome,
 chase cards, 9 double-sided chrome chase cards)
Episode I: Series One Widevision Hobby
 (40 cards, 8 chrome, 40 "far-flap" foil cards)
Episode I: Series One Widevision Retail
 (60 cards, 16 stickers, 11 mirror-board cards)
Episode I: Series Two Widevision Hobby
 (60 cards, 6 embossed chase cards, 4 chrome chase
 cards, 3 oversized box cards)
Episode I: Series Two Widevision Retail
 (60 cards, 6 embossed chase cards, 4 chrome chase cards)

2000

Star Wars Episode I 3-D (45 cards, 2 multi-media cards)

TRADING CARDS

Anthropology 101



Star Wars Insider offers you a first look at excerpts from *The Essential Guide to Alien Species*

Like Luke Skywalker, you may be strong enough to pull the ears of a gundark. But unless you read *The Essential Guide to Alien Species* (Del Rey, \$18.95), you won't know for certain what one looks like.

The latest entry in the Essential Guide series, written by Ann Margaret Lewis, includes a wealth of information about the creatures of the *Star Wars* universe, from beasts such as dewbacks to humanoid species such as the Yuuzhan Vong. Lewis' book offers 100 full-page entries illustrated by R.K. Post, as well as an appendix of shorter descriptions. Lewis has also written vignettes casting new light on each species—See-Threepio's discussion of the gentle, nature-loving Ithorians, for example, or Luke's farmboy lore about Tatooine's shaggy banthas. And a pronunciation guide and a timeline of milestones in alien history top off the book.

Along the way, Lewis (who's worked for D.C. Comics and written children's books) solves a few *Star Wars* mysteries. Gundarks may look different in video games than they do in the Marvel comics, but there's a reason. (You'll have to read the book to find it out, though Lewis offers a clue: "You know how a koala bear isn't really a bear—it's a marsupial?") Or take the Duros of the Mos Eisley cantina and the Neimoidians from *The Phantom Menace*: Are they one species or two? (Lewis has the answer, but warns that Duros and Neimoidians each have their own point of view on such a sensitive question.)

Not that the latest Essential Guide's entries don't offer lighter fare.

"I even wrote Ewok wedding vows," Lewis says. "I think that was my favorite one." ☺

Verpine

Verpine are highly intelligent insectoids that inhabit the Roche asteroid field. Each Verpine has two legs, and their sticklike bodies are covered by plates of flexible, green chitinous shell called carahide, capable of deflecting a glancing blaster bolt or a knife attack. Their two large, black eyes are a superior version of an ordinary insect's compound eyes and can perceive microscopic detail with amazing precision. They have short snouts with toothless mouths, and a single antenna extends from each side of the head. Unlike other insect species, they possess only two arms, each of which ends in three fingers, one being an opposable digit.

The Verpine antennae are sensitive to radio-wave transmissions, and with them, the Verpine can communicate with each other unaided over distances of approximately a hundred kilometers. By passing messages from one individual to another, they can create a natural radio-wave network spanning the entire Roche asteroid field. Some observers have mistaken this ability for telepathy.

Unlike other insectoid species, Verpine are hermaphrodites. When their hive needs additional members, the community asks selected Verpine to reproduce. Some are assigned egg production, and they lay their eggs in the colony's incubator. Others carry out assigned fertilization, then the entire community cares for the resulting hatchlings. At one time in their history, a brood would yield some semisentient drones that would be utilized as menial laborers. As the Verpine evolved, they abandoned the need for drones, and egg-layers began to ingest a special enzyme that ensures that broods yield only intelligent Verpine.

The Verpine are especially good at the arts of compromise and arbitration. Some historians claim that they

DESIGNATION
 > SENTIENT <
 PLANET OF ORIGIN
 > ROCHE <
 ASTEROID FIELD
 HEIGHT OF
 AVERAGE ADULT
 > 1.4 METERS <



evolved on a world called Roche, but destroyed it in a civil war. From this disaster sprang their social imperative for consensus, through which they achieve government. They use their radio-signal communication to poll the entire population on any given initiative. Because everyone has a say, everyone considers these decisions thoroughly binding. This system also allows any Verpine to speak with complete authority, so that, in effect, every Verpine is a political leader.

Verpine have an intense curiosity that causes them to take apart, reassemble, modify, and duplicate all devices that fall into their hands. They are experts in every field of technology and have even adapted the asteroids they now inhabit to suit their environmental needs, creating hermetically sealed tunnel colonies. Most house twenty to a hundred inhabi-

tants, while a few larger colonies house up to 1,000. All are self-sufficient, capable of producing energy, food, and air. Repulsor fields envelop the colonized asteroids to prevent collisions with other asteroids.

General Wedge Antilles writes of the Verpine:

> They are some of the finest shipbuilders and technicians in the galaxy. As the inventors of the ship stabilization system, or "gravity gyro," they have placed themselves among the top engineers and technicians. They are prone to making improvements—sometimes unauthorized—on any equipment we assign to them. I suppose there are worse habits a technician could exhibit.

Rodian

The Rodians are humanoids who are renowned as hunters. They possess multifaceted eyes, thin, tapering snouts, and green, scaly skin. Their long, thin fingers have suction cups at the ends, and a ridged spine crests at the tops of their skulls, evidence of their unique reptilian ancestry.

Early in their history, the rock-climbing lizards who were the Rodians' defenseless ancestors developed tools and weapons in their quest for survival. They concentrated on honing their hunting skills for acquiring food, and because they focused on hunting game, they never developed agricultural skills. The act of hunting became an ingrained part of their culture. Rodians sought honors from society—especially the Grand Protector, the leader of their civilization—in recognition for their hunting skills. For this reason, the Rodian people are, to this day, obsessed with the hunt and with the violence that results.

Their original targets were predators native to Rodia, but after a time, all predators that the Rodians hunted became extinct. When this happened, the Rodians began to hunt one another. To engender large-scale slaughter, they found or manufactured excuses for wars and nearly fought themselves to extinction, laying waste to their environment. For this reason, they now have to import much of their food and many other resources from off-planet.

Though extinction at one time seemed inevitable, a brilliant Grand Protector named Harido Kavila developed one of the Rodians' greatest cultural gifts to the galaxy. He developed Rodian theater and, with it, helped stop his species from destroying itself.

Since Rodians romanticize violence, drama was a good way to expiate the people's violent tendencies without requiring them to inflict harm

DESIGNATION
 > SENTIENT <
 PLANET OF ORIGIN
 > RODIA <
 HEIGHT OF
 AVERAGE ADULT
 > 1.6 METERS <

upon one another. Their dramatic efforts developed gradually, and the early works were little more than staged fights. But Rodian dramatists quickly realized that the effect of drama was magnified if the fights were presented as elements of an even greater story. Soon the complexity of Rodian stories grew, and they came to be as good as the choreographed violence.

Rodian drama has come to be highly regarded throughout the galaxy, for although it is violent, it deals with motivations and situations that provoke strong emotional responses in audiences. In addition, these dramas show the realistic effects of violence, so that non-Rodians—and even Rodians themselves, if the drama is well written—are struck by the moral impact of each performance.

Rodians are also renowned as brilliant weapons makers, and most Rodians work in the vast factories that



manufacture their famous products, such as top-of-the-line blasters. This is their main export, and it fits well with their legendary talents as hunters—talents that they also offer for profit.

Those who continue to hunt and who sell their talents often make a great deal of money and gain widespread fame on their homeworld and beyond. Bounty hunting has become an honored profession for Rodians. Prizes are awarded annually for Best Shot, for deceased catches; Longest Trail, awarded for persistence; Most Notorious Capture; Quickest Catch; and Most Difficult Hunt.

Because hunting is treated as a challenge and a contest, when Rodians

leave home to participate in bounty hunting, they find it irrelevant that they may be participating in a law enforcement activity, rather than sport. Rodian bounty hunters often "pad" catches, allowing their quarry to commit a number of additional crimes, substantially raising the value of the final kill or capture, and bringing them more status back home. They often freelance or work under contract to crimelords and other disreputable figures.

Despite their hunting prowess, Rodians are often viewed as cowards by members of other species. This is because they are generally unwilling to take risks or put themselves in danger to bring in quarry. For this reason, they often use the biggest and most destructive weaponry available to complete a commission. In addition, since they usually receive prizes when returning home with a kill, they may charge less to their employers if they are permitted to keep the remains of the victim. They charge exorbitant fees for bringing in live quarry because it often increases risk, and usually the Rodian will conveniently "forget" that part of a bounty agreement during the hunt.

All Rodians exude a peculiar scent that most non-Rodians find repugnant. These transcripts, of HoloNet nightclub entertainer Joon Odovrera's final performance, address this very trait.

> So a Rodian walks into a bar. [pause] Everyone leaves. [rim shot]

> No, seriously, folks, have you ever smelled one of these guys? I swear they have the odor of animal droppings on the bottom of your boot. They say it's a kind of mating hormone, but I tell you what,

that's a smell only a mother could love. [pause] Maybe that's why they're so inbred. [rimshot]

> But really, folks, I shouldn't rip on our Rodian friends like that. They've contributed a lot with their drama, haven't they? [clapping in audience] And how! Great theater. Only, they have to hand out aroma inhalers at the door. Can you imagine the smell of Rodians under the heat lamps and greasy makeup? I've heard of full-sensory immersion theater but this is ridiculous. [laughter]

> We got any Rodians in the room tonight? No? Trust me, you'd know if they were here. You'd all be crowded on one side of the room...

Besides being seen as solitary bounty hunters or as actors, Rodians are rarely seen off Rodia. This is because most Rodians believe that life is dangerous enough without having to cope with the potential of open combat with one of their own.



Yuuzhan Vong

The Yuuzhan Vong are bipedal, humanoid aliens whose origins lie somewhere outside of the known galaxy. They resemble humans in many ways, but are usually taller, heavier, and have less hair on their heads. Their faces look like lumps of pulsating flesh with droopy eyes underscored by bluish sacks. Their foreheads are sloped, giving them a barbaric appearance that is magnified by ritual tattooing and self-scarring employed by those of lower rank. Individuals of higher rank exhibit ever more grotesque mutilation and reshaping of the features.

This type of disfiguration appears to exemplify a ritualized system expected of each Yuuzhan Vong. The goal is glory: to become close to the gods by remaking oneself in their image. Thus, the disfiguration symbolizes a rise in rank, as the subject makes an additional physical change, ultimately remaking himself. To do this, they may graft other parts onto themselves—limbs from another creature or bioengineered body parts. They never attempt to maim themselves in any way that might permanently hinder their ability to function, but only in ways that change their appearance or improve their abilities. Those whose changing ceremony has failed, and who are functionally maimed, are considered Shamed Ones and demoted to the lowest ranks of the lowest caste.

Everything the Yuuzhan Vong do is for the greater glory of their gods, as they follow their path of conquering and dominating the galaxy, re-creating it—like their own bodies—at the direction of their gods. Along the way, they perform constant sacrifice and penance, because in their mythology, their creator sacrificed pieces of himself through great pain and eventually his own death, to rise to a higher exal-

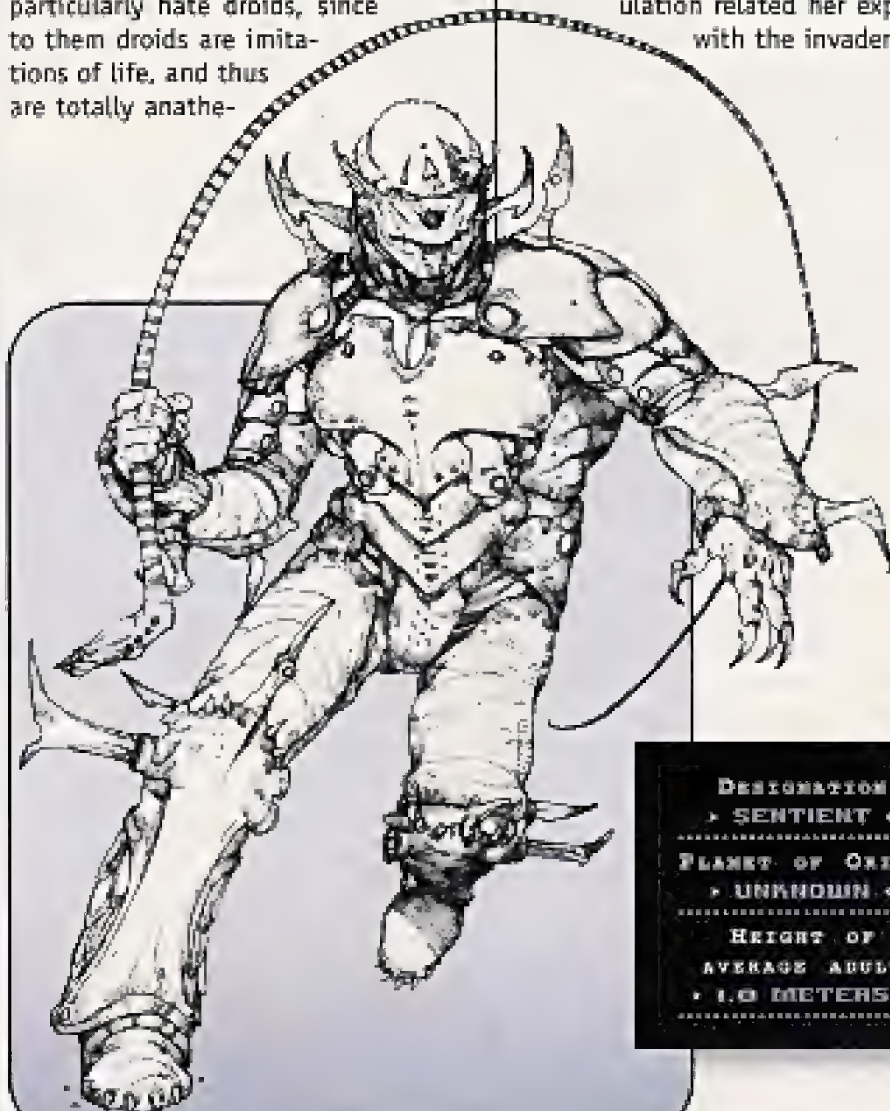
tation. Through this, it is said, he created the lesser gods, who in turn created the Yuuzhan Vong through the mixing and matching of parts from other creatures. Sacrifice, therefore, is required and is considered sacred.

These people are fierce warriors who will not surrender to an enemy under any circumstances, for fear of insulting their gods. Because they worship life, and find anything purely manufactured unacceptable, they use bioengineered weapons, tools, and ships, and they find the use of actual machinery inherently perverse. They particularly hate droids, since to them droids are imitations of life, and thus are totally anathe-

ma. They refer to those not of the Yuuzhan Vong as infidels. An attack on their pride is cause for a death duel, which also can be considered a sacrifice to their gods. To die in battle is among the highest honors they can achieve.

For some unknown reason, the Jedi cannot sense the Yuuzhan Vong through the Force. It is as if the Yuuzhan Vong are completely devoid of the Force.

After the Yuuzhan Vong force swept into the galaxy, advancing inexorably from planet to planet, a Garqi refugee caught up in the fleeing population related her experience with the invaders.



DESIGNATION
 ▶ SENTIENT ◀
 PLANET OF ORIGIN
 ▶ UNKNOWN ◀
 HEIGHT OF
 AVERAGE ADULT
 • 1.8 METERS •

> They were brutal, merciless, and unstoppable. They killed for the pleasure of it and seemed fulfilled by it.

> My father stood up to one. The Yuuzhan Vong was tall, muscular, and humanlike, but his face and body were horribly scarred and disfigured. He had no hair, and his nose was practically missing. He was horrible to behold. Father fought as hard as he could, but the Yuuzhan Vong sliced him in half. As he fell dead, the Yuuzhan Vong looked at me and laughed. He was using a sort of sharp-edged staff that bent and warped to his will. He started to swing the thing toward me, and I ran away as fast as I could. He started to follow me but was distracted by another fight.

The technological creatures of the Yuuzhan Vong are exclusively made up of bioengineered organic life-forms, and thus may be considered alien species in their own right. Only a limited number of these creatures have been encountered, so there is no way to determine whether the gathered data is exemplary of each species.

Amphistaff

DESIGNATION: NONSENTIENT

LENGTH: 1-3 METERS (APPROX.)

An amphistaff is an organic weapon that appears to be a vicious serpent, yet can harden all or part of its body to the consistency of stone, flattening its neck and tail so that it can cut like a razor. It also can become supple and whiplike for use by its Yuuzhan Vong master, remaining rigid at one end and flexible at the

snake-head end of its body, allowing it to inflict a venomous bite which causes numbness and paralysis.

The amphistaff can also become a deadly missile weapon, to be used like a spear. In addition, it has the ability to spit forth a stream of venom that arcs across twenty meters with stunning accuracy, blinding opponents instantly and killing them slowly over many agonizing hours, as the poison seeps in through the victim's ducts and wounds.

Coralskipper

DESIGNATION: NONSENTIENT

LENGTH: 1-3 METERS (APPROX.)

Coralskippers are Yuuzhan Vong bioengineered starfighters made of a living substance known as yorik coral. While no two coralskippers look exactly alike, they tend to share some features, such as a tapered nose and an aerodynamic hull. They are roughly triangular in shape, resembling an asteroid. Their canopies resemble natural mica more than transparisteel.

At the front of each skip, as they have come to be called by New Republic pilots, is a dovin basal that propels the coralskipper and creates black holes that absorb an

opposing fighter ship's laserfire.

To engage the enemy, a coralskipper draws close to its opponent and a small appendage on the front erupts like a miniature volcano, spewing forth a burst of fire and a single globe of molten rock that can melt through the hull of a spacecraft. In a circle of enemies, the coralskipper spins faster and faster, bending an adversary's laser blasts into a field of gravity. Opponents can't break free and are forced to orbit the coralskipper until they crash together, at which point the gravity well dissipates, and all of the ships, including the coralskipper and its suicidal pilot, go up in a tremendous flash of energy.

The coralskipper needs to gather nourishment in order to continue functioning. To get its required nutrients, and to rearm itself, it simply eats mineral-rich rocks.

Dovin Basal

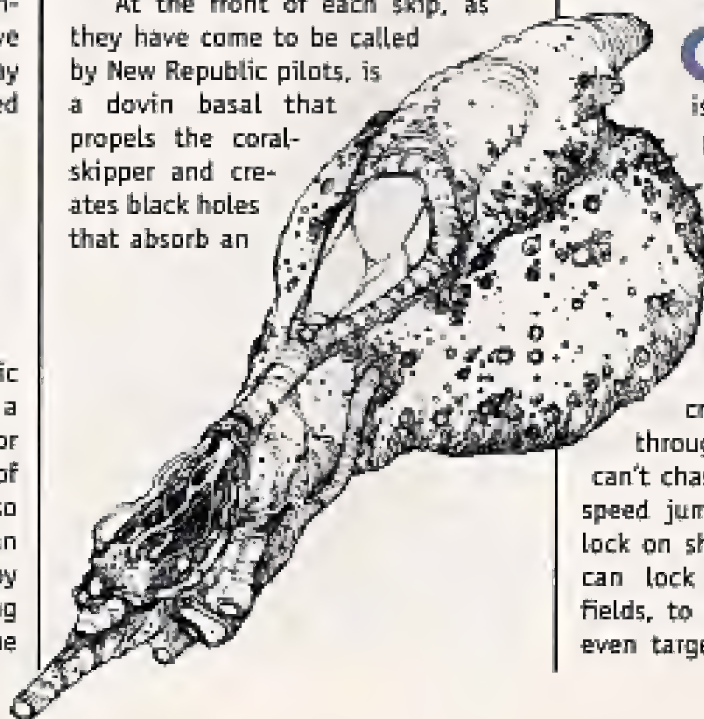
DESIGNATION: NONSENTIENT

DIAMETER: 1-3 METERS

(DEPENDENT ON SIZE OF VESSEL)

Dovin basals are bioengineered, spherical organisms that act like gravity-well projectors. They resemble huge, pulsating, dark red hearts with deep blue spikes projecting from them.

This creature can be used to propel a worldship and other Yuuzhan Vong craft through space and even through hyperspace, though it can't chase enemies through a light-speed jump because it can't hold a lock on ships through such a ride. It can lock on to stationary gravity fields, to the exclusion of all others, even targeting gravity fields millions



Yuuzhan Vong

of kilometers away. The adult, three-meter, spherical dovin basals work like perpetual thrusters. The more they focus their line, the greater the pull. One was used to pull down a moon onto the planet Serripidal, resulting in the deaths of millions—including Han Solo's close friend Chewbacca.

Blasters have no effect on these creatures, which create gravity fields that function like a black hole, even serving as a shield by containing proton torpedoes and other enemy projectiles. A dovin basal can similarly counter energy shields in opposing spacecraft, though New Republic pilots learned that, by boosting the sphere of the inertial compensator, they could prevent the dovin basals from taking their shields down. Cycling low-power shots through the lasers will also force a dovin-basal-powered coral-skipper to expend a lot of energy creating the black-hole shields, thus degrading its maneuvering ability.

Gnullith

DESIGNATION: NONSENTIENT

LENGTH: 1 METER

a bioengineered breathing apparatus for underwater use, the gnullith is a soft, star-shaped creature that latches on to the user's face. The central tendril of the gnullith then snakes down the user's throat. Once in place, it filters water to pull in only oxygen through the tendril. Yuuzhan Vong often use these in conjunction with the oogloth cloaker.

Jacen Solo, who had to use a gnullith to infiltrate a Yuuzhan Vong stronghold, writes in this report:

> The gnullith was very uncomfortable. It stung as it sealed itself into my pores like burning shards of



transparisteel, and it gagged me as it slithered down my throat. It worked very well, but I wondered why they had to make so painful something that should be so easy to use. What's the value in that?

Grashal

DESIGNATION: NONSENTIENT

HEIGHT/WIDTH: 3 X 16 METERS

(VARIABLE, DEPENDING ON BUILDING SIZE NEEDED)

a grashal is a bioengineered building. It looks like a huge mollusk shell, easily large enough to house a freighter and to store supplies.

The interior walls and floors of the grashal are smooth and vary in color from dark ivory to a soft pink. Darker gray spots dapple the walls at different points, but in no discernible pattern. The walls also seem fairly luminescent, but that may be due to sunlight filtering through the shell. Although the flooring is smooth, it's not slippery. Just inside the entrance to a grashal, a set of stairs leads

down into the main chamber. A number of tunnels from the main chamber lead to smaller chambers. A lightsaber can easily cut through the grashal's shell.

Oogloth Cloaker

DESIGNATION: NONSENTIENT

LENGTH: 2 METERS

(VARIABLE DEPENDING ON SIZE OF WEARER)

the oogloth cloaker is an organic environment suit. A variation of the oogloth masquer, the oogloth cloaker has thousands of tiny grappling tendrils that slip into a user's pores. Unlike the masquer, the cloaker's facial mask is transparent. It is paired with a gnullith, a soft, star-shaped creature that latches on to the host's face and allows the user to breathe underwater or in other harsh environments.

Oogloth Masquer

DESIGNATION: NONSENTIENT

LENGTH: 0.3 METERS

the oogloth masquer serves as a disguise for Yuuzhan Vong agents. Similar to the oogloth cloaker, the oogloth masquer has thousands of tiny grappling tendrils that insert themselves into a Yuuzhan Vong's pores, creating a false outer skin. Each masquer takes on the specific appearance for which it has been grown, and this enables the user to appear human or as any species, depending on the wearer's size and build. Sensitive to touch, it is well trained and can be reused many times. To remove the oogloth masquer, the user opens a seam along his nose and the masquer peels itself from the user, slithering down to the ground in the form of a slurping, sucking puddle.

Villip

DESIGNATION: NONSENTIENT
HEIGHT: 0.2 METERS

Villips are bioengineered organic communication devices, a pair of which are joined in consciousness with each other to communicate remotely across vast distances. There are several different types of villips, and the most common, when inactive, appears to be a ridged lump of membranous tissue. A Yuuzhan Vong strokes his villip to wake it so it will commune with its mate over distances. When the villip wakes, a single break in the membranous tissue—a hole that resembles an eye socket—puckers to life. Unfurling itself from around this puckered aperture, the villip swells and adapts its shape to resemble the head and shoulders of the Yuuzhan Vong with whom the user is speaking, including the voice. A villip also can be launched through space, where it can melt, or morph, through a spacecraft in order to communicate with its occupants.

In the case of the phenomenon known as the villip-choir field, a group of budded villips can be used together to broadcast a panoramic visual image. This affords the Yuuzhan Vong warrior a tremendous advantage in combat.

Yammosk

DESIGNATION: SENTIENT
DIAMETER: 16 METERS

a yammosk is an intelligent, bioengineered creature that serves the Yuuzhan Vong in a role they refer to as a war coordinator. It has a bulbous head that glows red with energy and excitement, two round black eyes, and many coiled and twitching tentacles that are each around a hundred kilometers long, some thick and some



filament-thin. It possesses one huge central tooth, which can be used with the force of a laser cannon to drill down into a planet. The yammosk secretes a liquid from the tooth to further erode a planet's crust. Like the jellyfish that it resembles, its body is boneless.

The yammosk can belch forth a huge, plasticlike bubble underwater—an air pocket—to encompass a large chamber, enabling its occupants to breathe without the aid of gnulliths or other breathing apparatus.

Telepathy is one of the yammosk's greatest weapons. Its telepathic power is strong enough to facilitate communication throughout a large gathering of Yuuzhan Vong. It can project its thoughts and feelings onto other species, as well, including humans. Following the earliest incursion by the Yuuzhan Vong, a victim of the yammosk's power, Danni Quee, noted in a report:

> It wanted Niko Reglia, a Jedi Knight, to experience uncontrollable despair and fear. It seemed to feed on it, enjoy it—as did all the Yuuzhan Vong who witnessed the torture. Time after time it taunted Niko with his own death, bringing him close to its cavernous mouth and its single, hideous tooth. It pummeled him with telepathic waves of hopelessness, and each time he weakened, its mental hold grew stronger and stronger. It slowly drained him of his will to live.
> It was horrible to witness. This creature that one might assume is mindless, unable to act without the commands of its masters, really does have thoughts of its own—and all of them are evil.

A yammosk will often reproduce quickly and will train its singular offspring immediately through a mental joining, teaching it to perform specific tasks. It has a huge blue pulsating vein that runs between its massive eyes and acts as a point of transference, sending out the signal that allows a Yuuzhan Vong to telepathically join its consciousness.

As a war coordinator, the creature provides the perfect communication and coordination tool that can bring forces of at least three expeditionary worldships into tight focus. It can allow the coralskippers to fly in perfect unison, thus making them many times more efficient than ordinary military craft. But if the enemy can manage to destroy the yammosk, the resulting chaos may bring about complete disaster among the Yuuzhan Vong.

WHAT WAS...

ANCIENT HISTORY LEADS TO A GAME OF RUUSAN ROULETTE.
ALTERED HISTORY CREATES A NEW, NEW HOPE.

BY DAVE LAND

» **HISTORY IS IMPORTANT.** If you don't know where you've been you won't know where you're going. That holds true for the real world and the world of *Star Wars*. In the upcoming *Star Wars* comics series, *Jedi vs. Sith* we'll be taking a look at some *Star Wars* ancient history and the effect that it had on everything that was to follow.

Sometimes ideas come from the strangest places. In the case of *Jedi vs. Sith* it came from the official Episode I style guide. In addition to images, logos, photos, and various design elements, the Episode I style guide included an entire section labeled "Jedi vs. Sith." I have the good fortune to edit *Star Wars* comics for Dark Horse so I get to look at these for a living. One day, several of us in the editorial department were looking over the style guide when someone remarked "That would make an excellent series!"

And so it was.

But it takes more than just a title to make a six issue comics series. If only it were that easy! We needed to find a story (preferably one with plenty of Jedi and plenty of Sith) to go with our title. Jedi Council member Ki-Adi-Mundi's line from Episode I pointed us in the right direction, "The Sith have been extinct for a millennium." It looked like we'd be hitting the history books!

In this case it turned out to be several different books—Dark Horse's own Dark Forces graphic story albums and *Star Wars: The Essential Chronology* from Del Rey served as guides which led us to the battle of Ruusan. This battle (and our story) takes place about a thousand years before the events of *A New Hope*. Not to give away the ending, but the battle of Ruusan concludes with the destruction of the Sith along with a healthy portion of the Jedi army. We'd found our story!

Now that we had the story idea, it was time to find a writer. That might seem back-



Jedi vs. Sith cover illustration by Andrew Robinson & Dave Stewart

"JEDI VS. SITH WILL BE ONE BIT OF 'HISTORY' YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS."



ward but sometimes that's how books come together. *Jedi vs. Sith* (like many projects) had a creative team that changed a bit during its initial stages. Originally it was to be

scripted by Ron "Darth Maul" Marz. Unfortunately, deadline issues and other projects conspired to keep Ron from this epic tale. A replacement was needed and one name kept coming to mind: Darko Macan. I could think of no one better to tell this story. Darko proved to be the right choice as he delivered a story about the events of the battle of Ruusan and humanized it by focusing on three innocent bystanders who are dragged into the conflict. The story follows three cousins who are searching for adventure. They find themselves recruited into the Jedi Army of Light and soon their lives are changed forever.

The rest of the creative team fell right into place once Darko had completed his outline. Raman F. Bachs and Raul Fernandez, fresh off of the *Qui-Gon & Obi-Wan* mini-series, will provide the art for *Jedi vs. Sith* and Chris Blythe returns to *Star Wars* providing colors after his masterful color rendering on last November's *Boba Fett: Agent of Doom*. We were fortunate to secure the services of Andrew Robinson for the cover art (with color provided by the one and only Mr. Dave Stewart). And, I would be remiss if I didn't mention Steve Dutro who will be lettering the series. Everyone involved is very excited about this project. *Jedi vs. Sith* will be one bit of "history" you won't want to miss.

What Will Never Be...

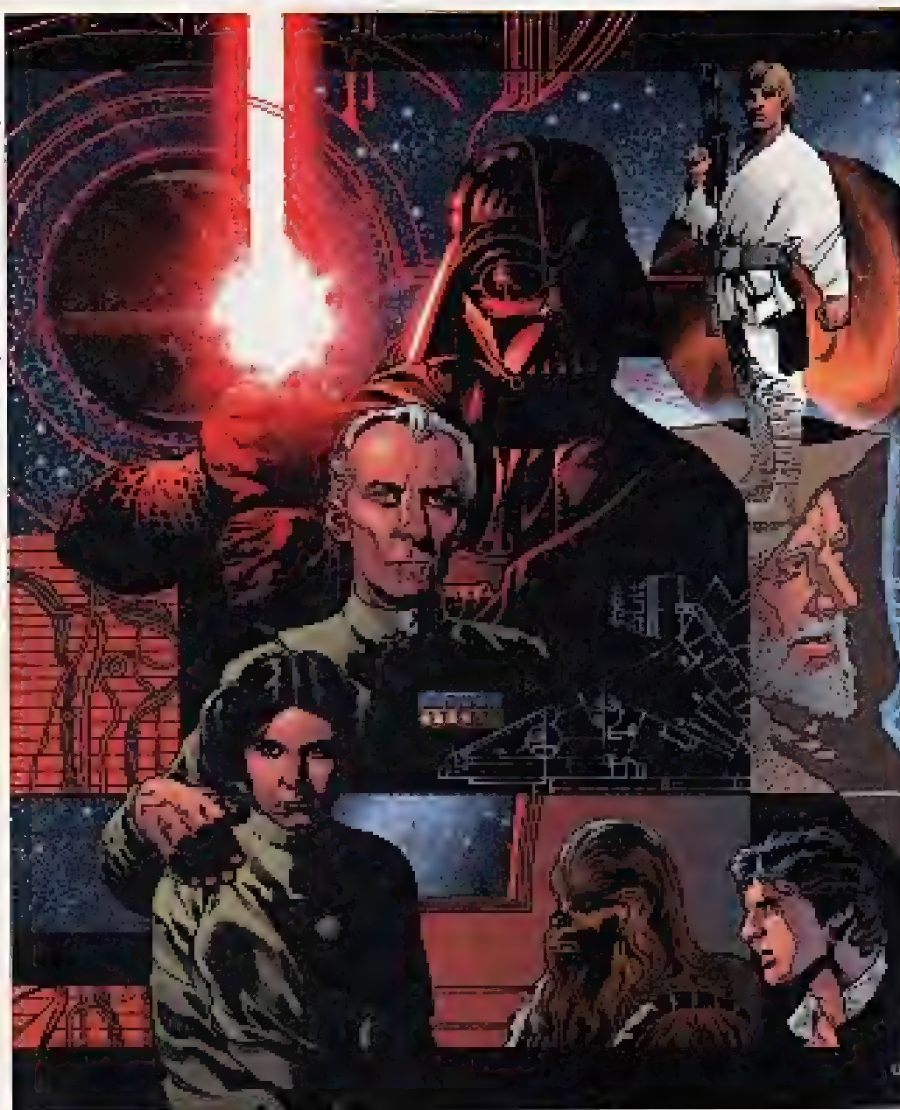
Familiar stories that are altered in some small way to affect the final outcome hold a strange fascination for me. Maybe it's because we'd all like the chance to relive a certain time in our lives and maybe do things a little differently than we did the first time.

In any case, stories from the Marvel Comics series *What If?* and DC Comics' *Elseworlds* line, or novels like Harry Turtledove's *The Guns of the South* (where rebellious South Africans with a time machine deliver AK-47s to the U. S. Confederate Army) and even Frank Capra's holiday classic, *It's a Wonderful Life*, had an influence on the upcoming *Star Wars* title, *Infinites—A New Hope*.

The first installment of *Infinites* is a retelling of events from the original *Star Wars* movie trilogy starting at the end of *A New Hope* and trailing through to *Return of the Jedi*. Now I'm sure we at Dark Horse aren't the only ones who've talked to *Star Wars*-loving friends about the alternate possibilities with that universe. "What if Greedo had killed Han in the cantina?" or "What if Luke had completed his Jedi training?" or "What would have happened if Uncle Owen hadn't bought R2-D2?" But if you'd asked me a year ago if I thought we'd ever be doing a title like *Infinites*, I would have said "No possible way." So imagine my joy when VP



Jedi vs. Sith internal illustrations by Raman F. Bachs & Raul Fernandez

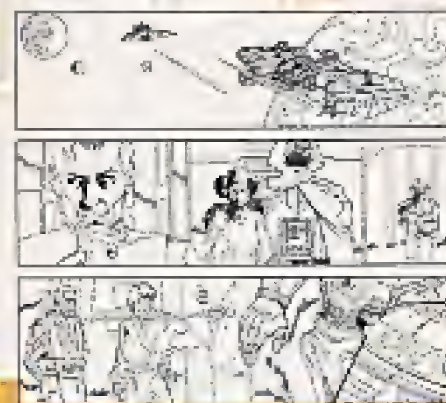


relatively easy to assemble from that point as Drew is a member of the Jolly Roger Studio and his fellow studio mates were ready to board. So Jim Royal, who worked on the Chewbacca series, will provide the inks and long-time favorite Tony Harris agreed to do the covers.

Infinites follows the *Star Wars* story we know—until the attack on the Death Star. Luke screams down the trench toward the battle station's exhaust port and fires his torpedoes... but they explode prematurely! The Death Star is rocked, but not destroyed.

In retaliation, the Death Star fires on the Rebel base on Yavin's moon, but not at full power. Princess Leia and others escape, but soon after lift off, the Death Star reaches maximum power once again and destroys the moon. In hasty retreat, Han and Luke believe Leia and the others were killed in the second blast, while Vader moves in and captures Leia's ship before it jumps to hyperspace. And that's just the beginning!

Other non-continuity *Infinites* titles are in the works and promise to open up the possibilities to fantastic stories featuring some of *Star Wars*' best loved characters. These stories allow readers with knowledge of the *Star Wars* movies but not the extensive continuity generated by the books, comics, and games to enjoy tales set in that galaxy far, far away... a continuity we'll have more news about next issue. Until then, keep reading! ☺



Infinites internal illustrations by Drew Johnson

of Publishing Randy Stradley told me that Lucas Licensing gave the go-ahead for *Infinites*.

Much like the *Jedi vs. Sith* series, *Infinites* had an early change in its writer. Originally Peter David was tapped to provide an outline... And what an outline he delivered! Its horrific, yet wonderful ending featured Luke and Leia serving side by side as the Dark Lords of the Galaxy. However, we wanted something closer in feel to the original *Star Wars* movie series and the consensus was that Peter's outline was a bit too grim. Rather than submit to further revisions,

Peter kindly bowed out (although I swear I will work with him again!).

I was at a loss as to who I'd turn to next. It was then that fellow Dark Horse Editor, Chris Warner, approached, asking if he could take a shot at writing *Infinites*. No stranger to comics writing, Chris delivered an outline that met with Lucas Licensing's approval and solidified *Infinites*—A New Hope as a reality.

Drew Johnson's clean line work and spot-on likenesses won him the job as penciller on this series. The rest of the creative team was

"WHAT IF GREEDO HAD KILLED HAN IN THE CANTINA?" OR "WHAT IF LUKE HAD COMPLETED HIS JEDI TRAINING?"



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KEYES TO THE GALAXY

J. GREGORY KEYES DOES HIS HOMEWORK

BY JASON FRY

» WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS OF A GOOD STORY? Any avid reader can rattle off a few: interesting characters, exciting plot twists, a sense of wonder.

Allow J. Gregory Keyes to add something else: research.

In writing the *Age of Unreason* series and the *Chosen of the Changeling* saga, Keyes constructed two fictional worlds in breathtaking detail. The *Age of Unreason* series takes place in an alternate 18th century in which Sir Isaac Newton discovered not the basics of physics, but the basics of alchemy. That discovery blurs the lines between science and magic, leaving historical characters such as Newton, Benjamin Franklin, and Blackbeard unmeshed in a war fought with fantastic weaponry wielded by European armies, secret societies, and an alien race. Meanwhile, the *Chosen of the Changeling* saga details two societies based around very different religions: an animist society in which trees, streams, and boulders all have their own gods, and one based around the worship of The River, which is at once a mighty body of water and a living god.

That both these worlds feel so real is a tribute not only to Keyes' gifts as a writer, but also to the fact that he did his homework. For the *Age of Unreason*, Keyes researched everything from pre-Revolutionary Boston to the fashions and favorite dishes of the time. For *Chosen of the Changeling*, he drew on mountains of reading, his childhood on a Navajo reservation and his anthropological work with the Choctaw of his native Mississippi.

That willingness to hit the books, he says,

helped him feel at ease in the *Star Wars* universe, in which he makes his debut with this month's *Star Wars: The New Jedi Order: Edge of Victory Book 1—Conquest* (Del Rey, \$6.99).

In writing *Conquest*, Keyes used a shelf-full of works that have detailed the histories, peoples, and places of the *Star Wars* galaxy, from Del Rey's own series of Essential Guides to the books in the New Jedi Order series, which he's been reading as they appear. He also went back to other *Star Wars* tales to ensure he had the right feel for the diverse cast of characters in his own chapter of the saga, from young Anakin Solo to the Jedi Kam Solusar and Tionne to Anakin's childhood friend, the Tatooine-born, Tusken-raised Tahiri. (Fans who remember Tahiri get extra credit: She made her debut back in 1995, in Boulevard's six-book Junior Jedi Knights series.)

Keyes admits that with *Star Wars*, "It's a little daunting to know how many fans there are out there and how many probably know more about it than I do." In writing the *Age of*

Unreason books, he recalls that he could feel imaginary people looking over his shoulder—historians and others who knew about the 18th-century world. "That's a very small number of people," he says, adding that "with the *Star Wars* books I've got lots of people looking over my shoulder waiting for me to make a mistake or play somebody wrong."

Make no mistakes, though: Keyes is up to the challenge.

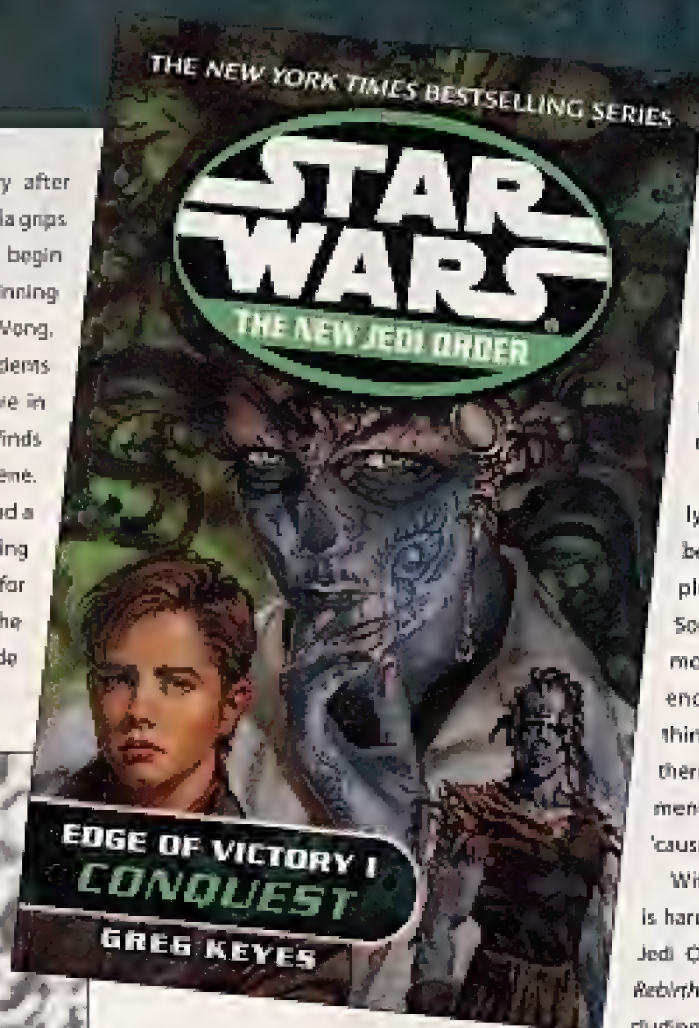
"IT'S A LITTLE DAUNTING TO KNOW HOW MANY FANS THERE ARE OUT THERE AND HOW MANY PROBABLY KNOW MORE ABOUT IT [STAR WARS] THAN I DO."

—J. GREGORY KEYES



CONQUEST MARKS SOMETHING OF A CHANGE OF EMPHASIS FOR THE NEW JEDI ORDER, STEPPING BACK FROM THE GRAND SWEEP OF GALACTIC WARFARE TO FOCUS ON ANAKIN.

Conquest picks up immediately after Kathy Tyers' *Balance Point*, as paranoia grips the galaxy and frightened citizens begin informing on the Jedi in hopes of winning mercy from the implacable Yuuzhan Vong. Luke Skywalker realizes that his students at the Jedi Academy on Yavin 4 are in danger, but with a war raging he finds himself powerless to intervene. Eventually, it's Anakin Solo (who's had a premonition that things are going wrong) who defies orders and heads for Yavin 4 in his X-wing—only to find the evil collaborators of the Peace Brigade already there looking for Jedi.



Conquest marks something of a change of emphasis for the New Jedi Order, stepping back from the grand sweep of galactic warfare to focus on Anakin. (Never fear, Jacen Solo and others will be focused on later in the saga.) Keyes also enjoyed the chance to stretch his creative muscles with his portrayal of the Yuuzhan Vong's caste of Shapers, whose attempts to breed a Jedi play a major role in the book.

It's a busy year for Keyes—besides *Conquest* and its sequel *Rebirth* (more about that in a bit), the *Age of Unreason* series wraps up in July with the Del Rey release of *The Shadows of God*. (Compleatists will want to track down "An Air of Deception," a short story written for *Amazing Stories* #596 that's set between the first and second books of the series.)

It's a series *Star Wars* fans will enjoy, sharing with George Lucas' saga a complex tension between science and what might be thought of as magic—a dynamic that one could argue makes both series fantasies, despite their scientific trappings.

"*Star Wars* is fantasy—especially the movies," says Keyes. "It's been interesting to see what people have done with the books. Some people have leaned much more toward reinforcing the science—and that's not bad—but I think when you come back to it there's always a certain fantasy element...the hyperdrive just works 'cause it works."

With *Conquest* under his belt, Keyes is hard at work on *Star Wars: The New Jedi Order, Edge of Victory Book 2—Rebirth* (Del Rey, \$6.99). *Rebirth*, the concluding book of the duology, will feature a momentous event of its own with the birth of Luke and Mara's child.

That latest stitch in the *Star Wars* tapestry will have to wait for *Rebirth*'s release in July; for Keyes, it'll complete (at least for now) a story that dates back, of course, to 1977, when he saw *Star Wars* as a sophomore in high school. As a fan who'd suffered through the drought of science-fiction movies in the 1970s, he recalls, George Lucas' space fantasy was "the sort of movie I'd been waiting to see my whole life."

It was opening night—or close to it—and it only took a moment for Keyes to become a fan. When Darth Vader's Imperial Star Destroyer came thundering across the screen, he says, "like everyone else...I was just grinning from ear to ear. I was instantly hooked." 🌌

STAR WARS STARFIGHTER

BY BLAKE FISCHER

TAKE ON THE TRADE FEDERATION—ONE SHIP AT A TIME

» I DON'T THINK I'M THE ONLY ONE who saw *Star Wars* and immediately made it a career goal to become an X-wing pilot. Not in a movie, but a real-life pilot (and now I write about video games for a living—so much for reality setting in.) While the odds of me getting a flight suit and blasting off into the stratosphere are rather low (zero), LucasArts has created plenty of games targeting my obsession over the years including the superlative X-Wing series on PC and Rogue Squadron on Nintendo 64. Now, with PlayStation 2, the company is once again pushing the genre forward with *Star Wars Starfighter*, a space combat game that promises to be the most realistic looking yet.



Starfighter places you directly into the cockpit of an N-1 starfighter and, as the game progresses, two other ships. Piloting a pinnacle of flight engineering has never been easier thanks to a control system that's easy to pick up, yet surprisingly robust. Players control their fighters using the twin analog sticks on the PlayStation 2 controller, while the other buttons are used for targeting, firing and, in the case of the digital pad, issuing orders to wingmen. "I think there's one button we're not using and that will be filled," jokes producer Reeve Thompson about the amount of options players have at their disposal.

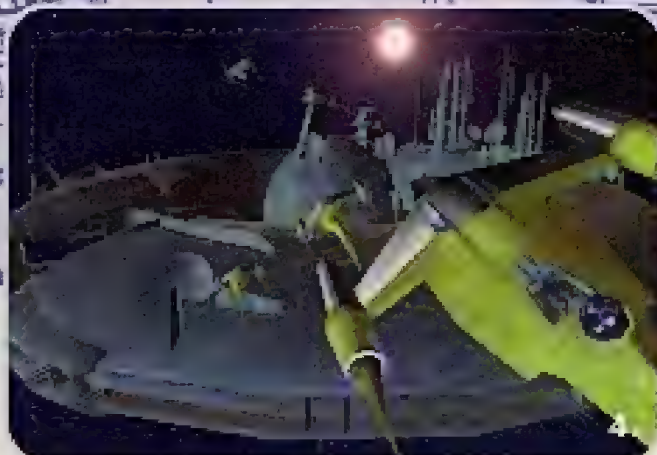
Still, he and the team also understand the need to keep the game accessible. "We wanted to combine the elements of the X-wing series that people really liked—some of the complexity of the gameplay—and bring it onto consoles and really make it work on a console the way *Rogue Squadron* did where you can just jump right in on start playing right off the bat," he stresses. "So, the whole time in development that's been the challenge, I think we've done a good job balancing the two."

Creating a spaceship dogfighting game within the Episode I framework was another challenge. "We really wanted to make an

Episode I game," says Thompson. "And that was actually a challenge because there really wasn't much flight in Episode I. There was that battle at the end but that was pretty small. Not as much to work with as in *Return of the Jedi*." So, when posed with this puzzler, the team took the necessary steps to make the game they wanted to play: namely, they created their own characters and story arc. "We've weaved our story with *The Phantom Menace*," says Thompson, "but we're really proud of our story on its own and I think it really stands out."

Since the storyline was almost entirely new, the team decided to forego the use of any familiar characters and instead create their own gallery of heroes and anti-heroes. Rhys, the first character you control, is sort of the Luke Skywalker of the group—he's a cocky young Naboo fighter pilot who, early on, gets separated from his squadron and trapped outside the blockade of Naboo. Vana Sage, on the other hand, is a mercenary pilot, more of a female Han Solo the gun for hire who left Naboo to work on her own. Finally,





there's Nym, who plays the bad-to-the bone Boba-Fett-esque space pirate who's tangled in with the other two. While the three don't start off as fast friends, their meeting, bonding, and eventual teaming up against the Trade Federation make up a lot of the early narrative for the game.

Each character also has his or her own starfighter, which makes a tremendous amount of difference in how you actually play them. For example, Nym's heavily armored bomber is much more suited to a full on frontal assault than Rhys' nimble Naboo starfighter or Vana's rigged-for-stealth fighter. You eventually play all three, as each character must complete his or her own specific missions to further the overall game storyline.

Ultimately, the gamers will decide whether the team was successful in meeting their ambitious goals, but from test runs, I can assure you that learning to fly is painless and quick thanks in part to a tutorial and a pretty intuitive setup. In fact, after just a few short minutes with the game I could navigate a treacherous canyon training level without sustaining too much damage (although here's a valuable lesson: In a narrow canyon, speed kills).

Other levels include defending a moon base and an outer space mission in which players must take out a horde of enemy fighters. Overall, the game holds 14 unique locales, each beautifully realized in ways that were simply not possible on other systems. On many outdoor levels you can even fly straight up and then flip around to see the contour of the land below you—along with

the battle you just left still going on in small scale. The first time you do this it will take your breath away.

Of course, Thompson can't help but reveal, "We even turn it up another level for the last mission of the game." Although I don't want to spoil the surprise too much (pragmatic readers can probably come up with a pretty good guess), you'll want to see the team's equivalent of a run on the Death Star.

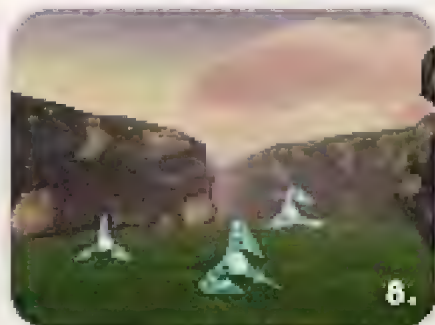
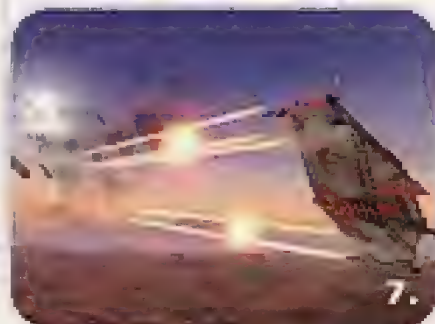
While I can talk up the game in this column it all pales next to the actual adrenaline rush of seeing it in action; of hearing the music drive you into battle and having the freighter you just blasted explode and splinter into a thousand pieces of space debris. Starfighter looks to raise the bar, not just for *Star Wars* games, but for the entire PlayStation 2 console. Pick it up. ☺

[FACING PAGE] New ships, new environments, and new characters make for a very different Episode I space combat game.

1. Huge environments and lots of control let the players fly wherever and how they like.
2. "She may not look like much, but she's got it where it counts, kid."

[THIS PAGE] Playing three different characters in three different ships, you have several options for exciting game play.

3. Vana Sage strafes an enemy convoy in her stealth fighter.
4. Rhys takes the fight to the skies, battling a Zoid Control Ship with his A-1 unit.
5. "Now let's blow this thing and go home!"
6. A new enemy is discovered over Naboo. Vana closes in for the kill.
7. Triple-mount linked laser cannons make Nym's armored bomber a deadly weapon in your hands.
8. "Squad leaders, we've picked up a new group of signals. Enemy fighters coming your way."



STAR WARS



scouting the galaxy

IS STAR WARS COLLECTING DEAD?

EXCUSE ME IF I DON'T DRESS IN BLACK,
BUT I'VE BEEN TO THIS FUNERAL BEFORE

BY STEVE SANSWEET

» A FEW DECADES AGO a raging theological debate broke through into the public consciousness. I still remember the usually colorful cover of *TIME* magazine giving way to a single white-on-black headline: IS GOD DEAD?

While I'm in no way equating our favorite movie saga with such a weighty religious matter, it wasn't that long ago that many had declared *Star Wars* collecting a dead category. It was a few years after most of the videocassettes of *Return of the Jedi* had vanished from the shelves. Yet in the view of the folks who put on the All American Collectors Show in Glendale, Calif., these were just kids' toys with no collector interest, and had no place on dealers' tables at their august event. (It took some convincing, but I eventually got them to allow my dealer friends, Ann and Judy of Collectible Toys, to show their *Star Wars* stuff, which, of course, did very well.)

But by 1986 and 1987, even a few of the largest American collectors had begun to give up. After all, they reasoned, didn't we have it all...or at least most of it? (There was no *Tomart's* guide or eBay to show them all of the cool international products they were missing.) There was no promise of any further film, television movie, or animated series. The toys had stopped and other new merchandise was practically non-existent. So they started selling their collections, some of them quite huge, built painstakingly over the years. Some reasons were personal, to help

finance a child's college education or as the result of a divorce. For some, after a decade, their interests had just turned to something else.

Did I panic? Absolutely! Here was an incredible buying opportunity and I desperately needed more cash. So I worked deals. For example, I got a poster-dealer friend to buy a large collection so that I could buy only that portion that I needed. I joint-ventured other collections that sellers wouldn't split. Should I have tried to convince the sellers that they were making a mistake? Of course not. They were doing

what they felt was right for them at the time, and whatever I would have said wouldn't have made a difference anyway.

Fast forward to today. What's different? Far more people consider themselves collectors. Information and opinion travel instantaneously thanks to the Internet. And collectors are very opinionated—as they should be. They complain when they can't find a product or when they're overwhelmed by too much; when they think a certain sculpt is ugly or a 14th version of character X is superfluous; whenever they want something they speak

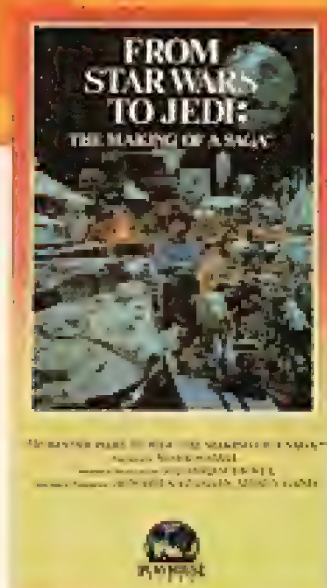
up. And, yes, a handful—a very vocal handful—has raised the old cry: *Star Wars* collecting is dead or dying.

Just like 15 years ago, some advanced collectors are selling off some mighty fine collections, for some of the same reasons, including financing their children's higher education. But if they're selling and getting good enough prices to do that, it means somebody (besides me) is buying. Lots of somebody's. A whole new generation of *Star Wars* collectors.

All hobbies have their ebbs and flows. What this one has going for it is that we're just a year or so away from a movie that's going to knock our socks off, that's going to be so much fun, that capital "F" isn't going to be big enough! And that will spur excitement in the toy aisle and down memory lane. That's my prediction anyway. Check back with me after the final credits. Now, on to your questions.

"BY 1986 AND 1987, EVEN A FEW OF THE LARGEST AMERICAN COLLECTORS HAD BEGUN TO GIVE UP. AFTER ALL, THEY REASONED, DIDN'T WE HAVE IT ALL...OR AT LEAST MOST OF IT?"

"ALL HOBBIES HAVE THEIR EBBS AND FLOWS. WHAT THIS ONE HAS GOING FOR IT IS THAT IS THAT WE'RE JUST A YEAR OR SO AWAY FROM A MOVIE THAT'S GOING TO KNOCK YOUR SOCKS OFF..."



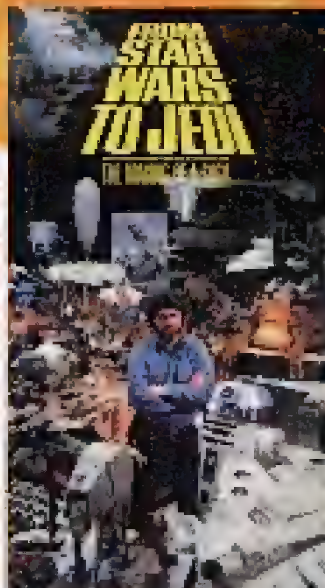
Every Saga Starts With a Video...

I'm writing to you about *Star Wars* documentaries that may or may not exist. I own "From Star Wars to Jedi: The Making of a Saga." I am repeatedly visited by a flourish of nostalgia every time I watch this piece and am impressed by the imagination and inspiration that went into the memorable ships, locations, etc. offered in the *Star Wars* universe.

Through an extensive Internet search I've confirmed the existence of documentaries on *Star Wars* and *The Empire Strikes Back*, and the one I have focuses primarily on *Jedi*. Can you offer any advice on obtaining these rare videos? Are they mentioned in any price guides?

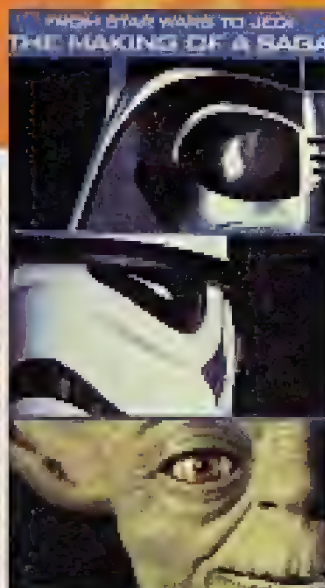
ERIC MORRISON
Butler, PA

These are both wonderful documentaries to view and fantastic collectibles. Since I'm making predictions, I think it's a safe bet that these classics will be with us



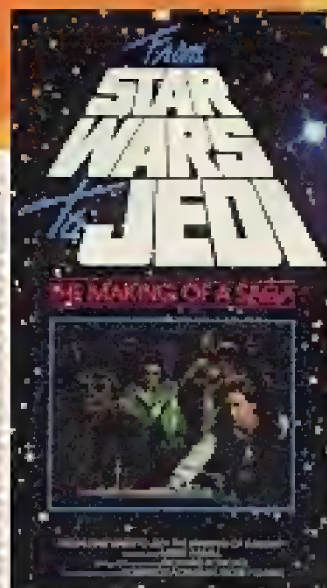
for years to come in some shape or form. The problem is finding them now.

The granddaddy of them all was released initially in 1982 for a system no longer in existence, the CED (capacitance electronic disc), a "laser" disk that used a needle. It consists of the first two documentaries, "The Making of *Star Wars* As Told by C-3PO and R2-D2," narrat-



ed by William Conrad; and "SP FX: The Empire Strikes Back," starring Mark Hamill. Each is about 50 minutes. The duo was also released in English in Japan on laser disk the same year; the two disks are very rare and would be valued at more than \$50. "The Making of *Star Wars*" by itself was available as a free send-away cereal premium offer from Kellogg's Corn Pops in 1995.

The video that you have, "From Star Wars to Jedi," came in at least four different outer wraps in the U.S. And there are at least two more documentaries for you to search out. Carrie Fisher and Billie Dee Williams star in "Classic Creatures: Return of the Jedi," a "look into the behind the scenes world of monster making." Finally, the Limited Edition Collector's Set of the *Star Wars* Trilogy Special Edition contains a half-hour cassette about the making of the Special Edition as an in-pack bonus. Most of these videos are listed in *Tamara's Price Guide to Worldwide Star Wars Collectibles*. As for getting them,



since they're out of print, your best bet is probably eBay. Happy viewing!

Standee Room Only

On my 13th birthday I received the largest gift of my life: a life-size stand-up of young Obi-Wan Kenobi. It was one of those store displays that advertise Mountain Dew. A friend's cousin works for Pepsi and he passed it on to her; knowing my love for *Star Wars* (and young Obi-Wan), she gave it to me. It's in my room, guarding my treasured wardrobe. I was wondering, what other characters are on the Pepsi standees and how much are these things worth, if anything?

MICHELLE LAXER
Rehoboth, MA



Nice friend! Two of my favorite areas of collecting are store displays and food items, and when you combine them you've got a sure winner as far as I'm concerned. There's something very cool about having something that you just can't buy, that's produced in relatively low numbers, and that's meant to help sell something else rather than to be sold. Years later, the Kenner action figure displays fetch more money than most of the original, cased action figures for just those reasons.

In the U.S., Pepsi had a number of wonderful store displays. Your Ewan McGregor as Obi-Wan is one of nine standees. The other two Mountain Dew standees are Jar Jar Binks and Darth Maul. The six Pepsi logo standees are Watto, Mace Windu, Queen Amidala, Qui-Gon Jinn, Boss Nass, and a Battle Droid. Are they worth anything? Well, one is guarding your "treasured" wardrobe, so I'd say it's worth a lot. In monetary terms, depending on character, size, and condition, they're going for anywhere from \$10 to pushing \$75 for the rarest ones. In Canada, the standees are somewhat smaller and the logos are different: Seven-Up is also used instead of Mountain Dew.

Get Revenge!

I was at a flea market when I saw a pile of posters. My eyes locked

onto what turned out to be an advertisement for the Star Wars Fan Club. But the coolest thing was that it included the follow-

ing: "Are you counting the days until *Revenge of the Jedi* premieres?" When I saw *Revenge*, I nearly flipped my lid and bought

it on the spot for \$4. It is in great condition because it was in a protective cover. Is it a poster or a page from a magazine, and how much is it worth? Thanks.

DAN MAXYMIV
Strangsville, OH

I hope your lid is back on, Dan. The important thing in this case is that you're pleased with your find. This was a freebie, a 1982 single-page handout at fan conven-

tions to solicit memberships (then only \$5 a year) when the club was still run internally by Lucasfilm. Tens of thousands of these flyers were printed, and lots of people (like me) scooped up multiple copies, which is why many dealers still blow them out at \$1 each. But \$4 isn't such a terrible price and it's a nice piece on which to start building a Revenge collection.

"D" Is For Cookie, That's Good Enough For Me

Was a Darth Vader cookie jar ever produced? I thought that there was one released in the late '70s along with R2-D2, C-3PO, and a turnabout jar. I saw a Vader jar produced by a company that was called Golden Onion or something like that. The owner claimed that it was made a couple of years ago. When was this jar produced and what is its approximate value?

DAVID T. MCPHILLIPS
Columbus, NE

A Darth Vader figural ceramic cookie jar certainly seems like a natural to me too. After all these years, you'd think one must have been produced...and yet, none has. As you note, after Star Wars came out, Roman Ceramics did the well-known R2-D2 cookie jar and its lesser-known and more delicate C-3PO companion as a follow-up. I've scoured the Lucasfilm licensee list and don't see anything that comes close to Golden Onion. For a while, lots of "white ware" or unlicensed pottery that was bought in ceramics shops, painted and glazed by customers and brought back to be fired in the shops' kilns was popular. But even then, I've never seen a Vader cookie jar, only garish



You couldn't find these in the Tomart Guide, Patrick, because we list only licensed items. These are bootlegs, unlicensed, rip-offs, illegal reproductions. Unfortunately it's not uncommon for memorabilia dealers to take slides of photos and posters and reproduce and sell them without the copyright owner's permission or any quality control. They are stealing Lucasfilm's intellectual property—and that of every other film company and artist whom otherwise would get royalties if these items were licensed. Unfortunately, it is a thriving underground business. But we won't abet it by listing

"UNFORTUNATELY IT'S NOT UNCOMMON FOR MEMORABILIA DEALERS TO TAKE SLIDES OF PHOTOS AND POSTERS AND REPRODUCE AND SELL THEM WITHOUT THE COPYRIGHT OWNER'S PERMISSION..."

lamps, mugs, and other pieces.

There is one licensed cookie jar by Sigma from 1982 that the Dark Lord of the Sith has to share with Anakin and Threepio. Maybe that's what you're thinking of when you refer to a "turnabout" jar, a term I haven't heard before. It's a white, six-sided jar with dimensional sculptures of the droids on one side and Vader on the other. New, it cost around \$38. Today it will set you back only about \$50-\$60, maybe less.

Rip-off Artists

While vacationing in New York City I came upon a vendor who sold 8 by 10 mini-movie posters and photos of various films for \$5 each. I purchased a few including some from A New Hope and The Empire Strikes Back. I also came across a photo of the main characters with Chewbacca in a red cloak and



some other photos. I didn't find any of these in the Tomart Price Guide. Any help would be great.

PATRICK SCERRI
Harper Woods, MI

such things in an official price guide. Chewie in the red cape, by the way, is a scene from the lamentable 1978 "Star Wars Holiday Special." ☹

scouting for answers?

Please send your questions and comments about collectibles to: SCOUTING THE GALAXY, P.O. Box 1887, Petaluma, CA 94953-1888. Individual replies aren't possible because of time constraints, but we'll answer the questions of broadest interest in the column. Letters are edited for grammar, sense, and length.

Jedi'Sith as any of the male fans. I know many female fans whose *Star Wars* collections and knowledge outweigh many of their male counterparts.

I know that all the female fans of both the *Star Wars* Chicks and *Sith_Chicks* lists as well as most, if not all, other female fans would be grateful if you at *Star Wars Insider* could help shed light on this situation.

KRIS OLLER
Modesto, CA

I am an avid *Star Wars* fan and one of the many female *Star Wars* fans. I don't feel we get the recognition we deserve.

I grew up on *Star Wars* and even played it at recess with my two friends during elementary school. I didn't become a total fanatic until the Special Edition trilogy was released. It ignited the fire in me, and now I eat, drink, and sleep *Star Wars*. It's obvious, just by walking in my room, how much I love *Star Wars*. Most of the guys I've met who say they are *Star Wars* fans don't know as much about it or love it as much as I do.

Until last year I thought I was the only female *Star Wars* fan. I was surfing the web when I discovered a website called *Star Wars Chicks*. This site is created by female *Star Wars* fans, for female *Star Wars* fans. We would be forever grateful if you would be willing to set the record straight and acknowledge the female *Star Wars* fans.

BETHANY ANDERSON
Mesa, AZ

I subscribe to your magazine and am a very enthusiastic and committed *Star Wars* fan. *Star Wars* is one of my greatest joys and helps keep me happy when times are tough, so as I hope you can see, it means a lot to me.

I am a female fan, and approximately 41% of *Star Wars* fans are female according to some sources. Speaking for many of my fellow female fans, we feel we don't get

as much recognition as the male fans.

A lot of female fans became upset when they could find hardly any *Star Wars* merchandise for females (such as shirts). When they did find any, they only had female characters on them. While we admire and like these characters, they are not the only reason why we like *Star Wars*. We basically love everything about *Star Wars*, so when we were reduced to being expected only to like the "feminine" parts, we were hurt.

Some of us sought recognition, and a few amazing women started a website called *Star Wars Chicks* (www.starwarschicks.com). *Star Wars Chicks* has brought together a lot of female fans, and has grown quite a lot. SWC had a "Fight For the Cure" campaign and the money [raised] was donated to the Karisas Cancer Institute for researching a cure for breast cancer.

At the moment, all we are really looking for is recognition. We hope you will be able to give that to us.

CHRISTINA BROWN
Palmdale, CA

You want recognition? Okay! We got a whole bunch of letters from *Star Wars Chicks*—this is only a sample. The 41% figure was quoted in a few letters, and while I couldn't find any data to verify that figure, I have no good reason to disbelieve it either. I mean, what are the parameters for who's a *Star Wars* fan and who isn't? What's the survey method? Sample size?

Ah, who cares? The important thing is that girls are cool, and way welcome in *Star Wars* fandom, whether you like the romance, action, humor, or whatever. If you're a girl or woman who loves *Star Wars*, be proud! You're not weird, you're not a wannabe, and judging from the mail we received, you're certainly not alone.

Darth Toad?

Am I seeing things? I recently saw *X-Men* (which was great!) and I was amazed at something

that caught my eye. In the final battle scene, when Ray Park is fighting Storm and he pushes her into the elevator shaft, he grabs a pole-stick thing and then does a lightsaber move like in Episode 1. I have seen Episode 1 millions of times and I want to know if that was a Darth Maul move, or if I need to get a life!

CASEY L. CLAIBORNE
Correllton, TX

I just did some quick math and even if we're talking low millions (say, two) at a U.S. video running time of 133 minutes, that's slightly over 506 YEARS, assuming you have two tapes and don't have to wait to rewind (plus another hour and 44 minutes for getting side-tracked on X-Men). I don't think you need to get a life. In fact, I want to know how you got the one you have!

But seriously, good eye! You're not the only one who noticed that "chopping Maul" flourish. Keep an eye on that Park fellow. He's going places, I tell ya.

You Can't Be Healthy

I have been a devoted fan since the age of 7. I have every *Star Wars* Insider issue since #22. I have devoted the last five years to all things *Star Wars*. I was there in the rain and mud at the *Star Wars* Celebration, and I was there when The Phantom Menace opened. I eat, sleep, and breathe *Star Wars*. I can't pull away from the grasp of *Star Wars*. It is too great a power, almost as great as the Force. Thanks for all the pleasure you have brought me.

JAKE PIKKANEN
Sallisbury, VT

Thank YOU, Jake. We love being a part of the *Star Wars* phenomenon, and we're happy to give you what you're looking for! By the way, this is the second person this issue who eats and sleeps *Star Wars*. Are you listening, *Star Wars* chefs and mattress manufacturers? Your audience loves you!

Heavy Medal

In almost every issue of *Star Wars Insider* someone asks the question, "Why didn't Chewbacca receive a medal?" In fact, he did receive one. The Marvel Comics Illustrated Version of *Star Wars* published in November 1977 by Ballantine Books explains why Chewbacca was not given his medal during the awards ceremony at Yavin 4. It states, "Chewbacca the Wookiee, too, will have his own medal... But he will have to put it on himself. Few space-princesses are that tall." I hope that this will clear up the confusion surrounding this issue. Now the only question is: Why didn't R2-D2 and C-3PO receive one?

FRANICHA BALTER
Thousand Oaks, CA

Don't forget the 1997 MTV Movie Awards where Carrie Fisher presented Chewbacca with a lifetime achievement medal. Actually, that means Chewie has double the medals of those other heroes! Looks like there's justice after all!

As far as R2-D2 and C-3PO, hey, you don't give the shovel credit for digging the hole, right? Well, I suppose you might if the shovel walked under its own power... and was fluent in over six million forms of communication... and kept you from getting squashed in a trash compactor and helped you trigger TIE fighters in your snub-nosed fighter.

Hmmm... okay, back to no justice.

Live Your Dream!

Okay, I really need to know because I am trying to get some of my writing published. How do I get permission from Mr. George Lucas or Lucasfilm to use the characters and situations he created in stories I've written. Is there any way you can recommend to contact Mr. Lucas or his representatives regarding this matter?

Thanks, and keep up the good work! This is one magazine I eagerly await every couple of months.

TIMOTHY BOSLEY
South Lyon, MI

We answered one of these questions fairly recently in Rebel Rumblings, but I have an answer I like to give when people ask. Because we get it a lot.

Lucasfilm is very careful about who they approve to write official fiction that affects continuity. It is difficult, but not impossible to write for them. It will take a lot of work, long-term planning, and tenacity. This could literally take years. Realize that, and accept it going in.

First, write whatever Star Wars stories you want to write. There's nobody stopping you from writing for your own pleasure and for your friends, using whatever characters or situations you want to use. Write for yourself and enjoy the experience. But don't try to get it published. What you want to do right now is build your skills and bibliography. Get your chops as a writer.

Start writing for other publications. Don't limit yourself to fiction—write whatever you can get somebody to pay you to write. Just start working on your skills. Write newsletter articles. Write movie and book reviews online. Just find places to write.

You might not be able to get money at first. That's okay. Volunteer to write for the newsletter at your work, school, church, or community organization. Volunteer to update the website at one of those places. Make yourself useful to people who need things written. This will seem slow and boring sometimes, but this is called "paying your dues." Do it.

Also, read. Read everything. Read novels and newspapers and magazines and poems and scriptures and street signs and cereal boxes and fine print and instruction manuals and comic books and the dictionary and WHATEVER has words, read it. Absorb it. Put it in your head. You'll use it. I promise you.

If you're in college or younger, plan to get a degree in journalism or English. If you're past college, consider taking writing or literature classes at a local college or university.

It will also help for you to gather your courage and go ask somebody you know who writes well to help you. That person might not be much help, but then again maybe so! And if you ask and don't get help, you're not any worse off than when you hadn't asked at all. So go do it. If that person doesn't help, go find another one. Repeat as necessary.

"But I wanted to write fiction," I hear you saying. You have been writing fiction this whole time, right? Have you been writing non-Star Wars fiction? Yes, you have, because you're smart, and you know that Lucasfilm will want published examples of your fiction writing before they even think of letting you write using their characters. So you have to practice that too, and in addition to your Star Wars fiction, which will not be printed, you need to write fiction which will be printed.

Once you can write well, you're still not there. Now you need the skills of a professional writer. Some of these are personal skills, and some of these business skills. You'll need them all to some degree.

Be consistent. When you say you'll turn something in, turn it in—no excuses. In publishing, being dependable makes up for other flaws in so many ways you'll never know.

Be patient. Wheels turn slowly in publishing. Months will pass before you hear from some people. They're not ignoring you, they're just busy.

Be tenacious. The people who judge your writing will be more likely to say "no" than "yes." Give them another chance later on. They might change their minds.

Be brave. People will be mean to you with alarming frequency. Brace yourself for it. Some people do not understand and perhaps do not want to understand. Other people WILL understand. Be brave until you find them.

Be friendly. This will get you almost as far as being consistent. No joke. Editors want to work with a person who makes their lives easier. You want to be that person.

Be organized. Keep everything straight on your computer and know where you put things.

Get rearsheets. When you get printed, keep copies of what you wrote so you can show them to other people who might hire you. Think of them as trophies. You don't wave your trophies around and brag about what you've done, but you keep them in case someone wants to see them.

Get your money. Don't be rude, but be forthright. You're not a pro until you get paid. Keep records, send invoices, and cash the checks promptly.

Once you've written several published articles or stories and gotten paid for doing it, you are now ready to turn your searing gaze upon Star Wars. Start with Star Wars magazines. There are usually a few around, even if they're not Wizards of the Coast magazines. Write to one using the methods you learned while working on other publications. Once the editor of your chosen magazine accepts your article, propose another. Keep at it until the editor

sees that you are a valuable and dependable writer: knowledgeable, well-rounded, skilled, artful, easy to work with, and enough of a Star Wars geek, but not too much.

Then, after you've built a relationship with that editor, tell him or her that you want to write fiction. You're basically asking him or her to do you a favor, so don't rush this. But since you've been such a good egg, maybe helped out in a pinch, the editor will probably go to bat for you, and try to get you a shot at being approved by Lucasfilm. This is where you submit your enormous bibliography of published works and three or four of your best rearsheets to be reviewed. If they give you the thumbs up, they'll want to see short fiction first. If they like your work over time, they might eventually approach you to write a novel.

That's how it's done. This could easily be a twenty year process, start to finish, with no guarantees. Of course there are always flukes, and anybody can get lucky. But if you want it that bad, that's it. ☺

NEXT ISSUE:

RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK 20th Anniversary Special

Interview: Peter Wolpole

Star Wars: Episode II
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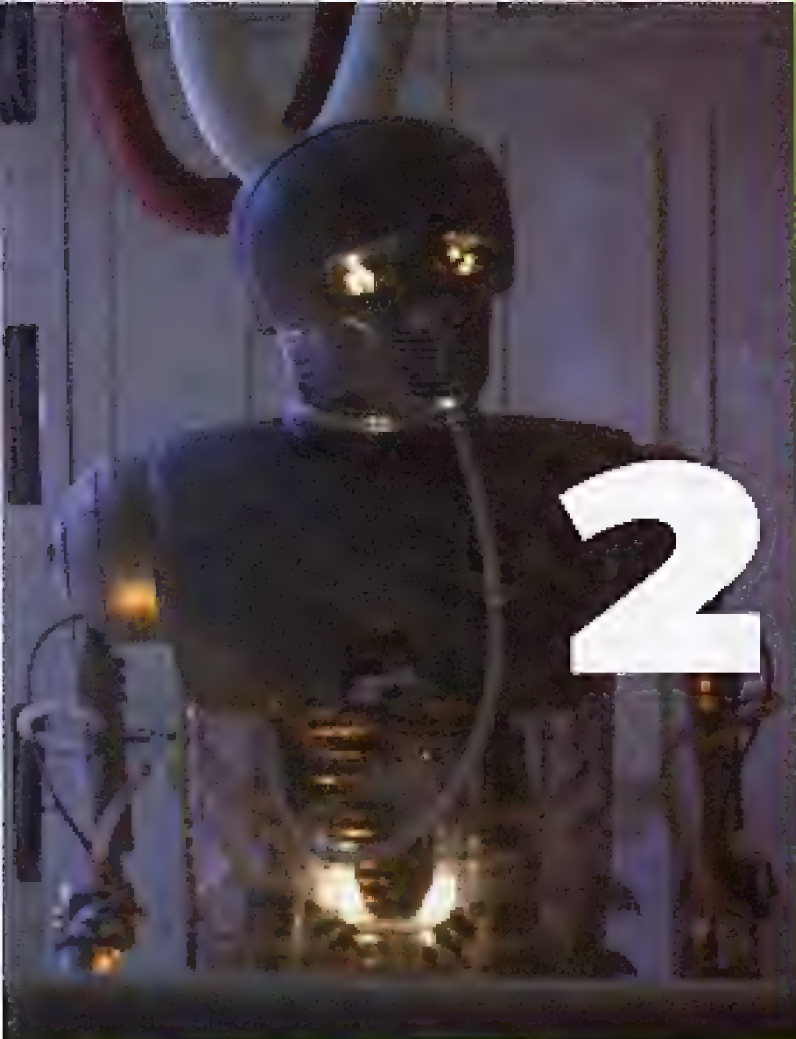
Bone of the Sith
by Kevin J. Anderson

Spaceports
by Kyle Hunter
& Michael Mikoelian

The Smuggler's
Alliance
by JD Wiker

Star Wars Silent Death
Starship Combat Game





DEAR -1B

ADVICE FOR HUMANS

Dear 2-1B,

I know this girl, and she's really cool, and I think she kind of likes me. But every time I try to talk to her, I start to get so nervous and I just can't. If I don't get over this shyness soon, I'm sure she's going to start going out with Rich Friedman, who, you know, is not me. What should I do?

TOO SHY IN TULSA

Tulsa, OK

Ah, young love. How your unsigned letter reminds me of the earliest days of my activation, when I was but a brand new droid far off the assembly line, gifted with nothing but courage, passion, and databanks brimming with lubrication and medical expertise. I was unaware that I would play the central role in taking down the Empire by ensuring the survival of a little Jedi named

Luke, but I was ready to give it my all.

My circuits were overloaded with confidence, but when my laser sensor system picked up the presence of a fetching young protocol droid with the mesmerizing identification number of TC-29, the liquids in my hydraulic system got all imbalanced and bubbly. She was graceful and courteous, and so shy that I detected twice the normal level of light in her presence. But I didn't have time to be "Too Shy" or go to Tulsa. After all, I had an Empire to topple. So I introduced myself immediately, and she was bowled over by my accurate use of droid-to-droid protocol.

We began a torrid love affair based on our shared commitment to bringing peace to the galaxy through proper health and precise communication. Many was the

night we would steal away together to the Yavin hillsides under cover of the dark sky, gazing at the stars, her articulated metallic hand in my cold, inviting prong, and just talking—talking, talking, talking all night long about the future. We were going to build a cabin on Kashyyyk and grow outmoded there together, spending our decommissioned years in rocking chairs, content in the knowledge that we had brought a peaceful end to generations of irrational human conflict.

Would that it had been so. Alas, while I indeed was destined to hasten the departure of the Sith from the galactic stage for once and for all, my future with TC-29 was not to be. Seven months, four days, 19 hours, and .08 seconds after I met her, my beautiful protocol paramour was packed up and shipped to the Outer Rim, for use in a secret Rebel strategy center. Her faraway assignment necessitated new confidentiality programming, which made her seem distant and remote in the few letters she wrote. After a while, we drifted apart, and by the time I got to Hoth, she was but a bittersweet memory, and I

was a hero in the making.

Sure, I moved on to greener pastures, but I often wonder what became of TC-29, and what role she may or may not have played in my triumph. So to answer your question, Albert (which I'll call you because you didn't sign your name and you seem like an Albert), I would recommend staying shy, because even if you do win this girl's heart, it's only a matter of time before she is boxed up and sealed off to Mars or Saturn or Mercury or whatever pathetic little planets are in your vicinity.

Bitter? Perhaps. Perhaps my resolve is a little steeled than most, and perhaps I may strike some as especially focused on my role in the Rebellion. But while I will admit to a certain cynicism, the fact remains that I, 2-1B, medical droid, am a misayer and an assault droid in the fight against evil. My concerns are universal. I reject absolutely revenge, aggression, and medical malpractice. The foundation of such a method, Albert, is love. Love for life, love for the Rebel cause, love for this crazy business we call saving the galaxy. And, yes, love for even the worst

among us, like Emperor Palpatine and FX-7. I love you, Albert. Good God, do I love you.

Dear 2-1B,

I am trying to put together a Rebel Flight Suit. I have everything except the flak vest and life support system. Could you please help me out with some ideas on how to build these items? I will be very grateful.

BYRON KELLOGG

Mesa, AZ

Certainly. Here's an idea, Brian: stop building now and never start again. Your fleshy existence and lack of engineering circuitry are

quadrant 2—and believe me, I know that at the deepest levels of my programming. Yet you persist in endangering your lives and therefore the entire Rebellion, making my responsibility all the more awesome.

This is the kind of thing that really ticks me off about you guys. I'm talking about all you dorked-out slobos who read straight through to the back of *Star Wars Insider* and expect some kind of medal for your tenacity. Meanwhile, here I am, pouring out my soul in answer after answer, giving you rare and valuable insight into my past, increasing my asking price for convention appearances, and stressing again

to at least a Lando-as-General costume, or (call me crazy) just some khakis and a button-down shirt. Because clearly, thanks to your total disregard for basic medical-assistance apparatus procedure, you do not deserve to wear the same style of flight suit as worn by Luke Skywalker when he fired the shot that destroyed the Death Star. And I should know, because Luke Skywalker, who practically owes his life to me because of how many times I saved it, happens to be a close, personal friend of MINE. All mine, Ryan. ALL MINE. ☹

"MY CONCERNS ARE UNIVERSAL. I REJECT ABSOLUTELY REVENGE, AGRESSION, AND MEDICAL MALPRACTICE."

—2-1B

no excuse for your shocking lack of sophistication: to even begin crafting the flight suit before you've completed the life support system is only asking for trouble. The medical technology should be the first element developed, and then (and only then) the superfluous costumery can be designed around it. How many times do I have to tell you people? I mean, I'm only trying to help save your lives. You think *Star Wars* is all about looking cool, but it's not. It's about ensuring the health and survival of all Rebel officers stationed on Hoth Base, and administering medical assistance to all who qualify as listed under calculation zone 6C

and again the causes about which I care most: justice, medicine, and the unilateral deactivation of the faulty FX line of medical assistant droids. But do you care that me and that laser Albert shared a moment of bonding over having loved and lost? No, you just forge right ahead with your costume question, oblivious to the fact that Rebel Flight Suit costumes are SO OVER. Yeah, that'll be just as fresh today as it was back at ComicCon '78; hey, hop on board the *Galactica* while you're at it, Starbuck.

Seriously, Ryan, now that you see how right I am, let's get with the times. I'd recommend upgrading

need advice? GOT A QUESTION NOBODY ELSE WILL ANSWER?

Write to: **DEAR 2-1B** c/o REBEL RUMBLINGS, P.O. Box 707, Renton, WA 98057, or e-mail TwoOneBee@aol.com. All mail **MUST** include your full name and home city. Letters may be edited for clarity and space considerations. *Star Wars Insider* is not responsible for any unsolicited material received. The views of 2-1B, a medical droid allied with the Rebellion, do not necessarily reflect those of *Star Wars Insider* or Lucasfilm Ltd.



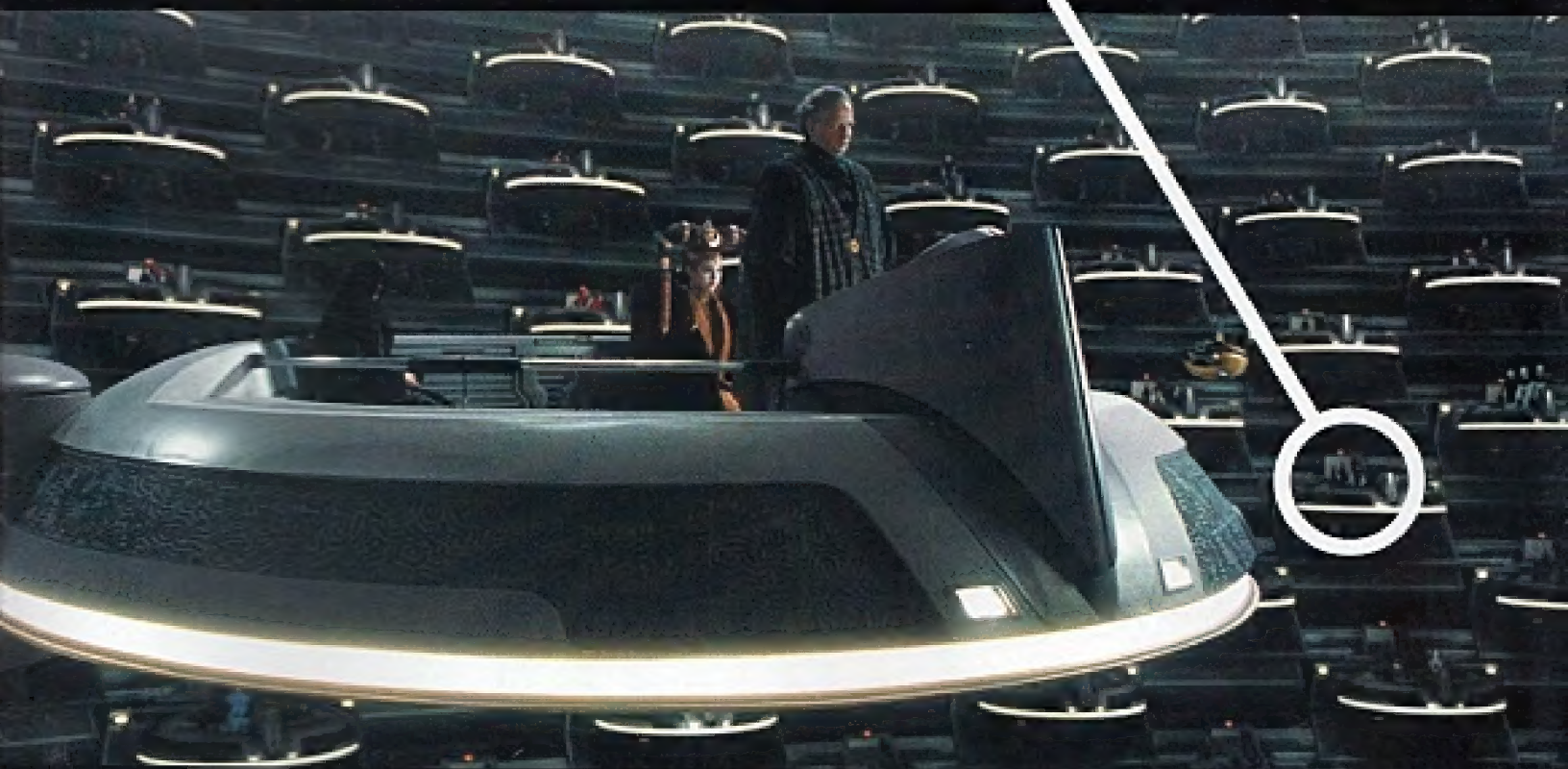


last page

ILLUSTRATED BY STAN SHAW



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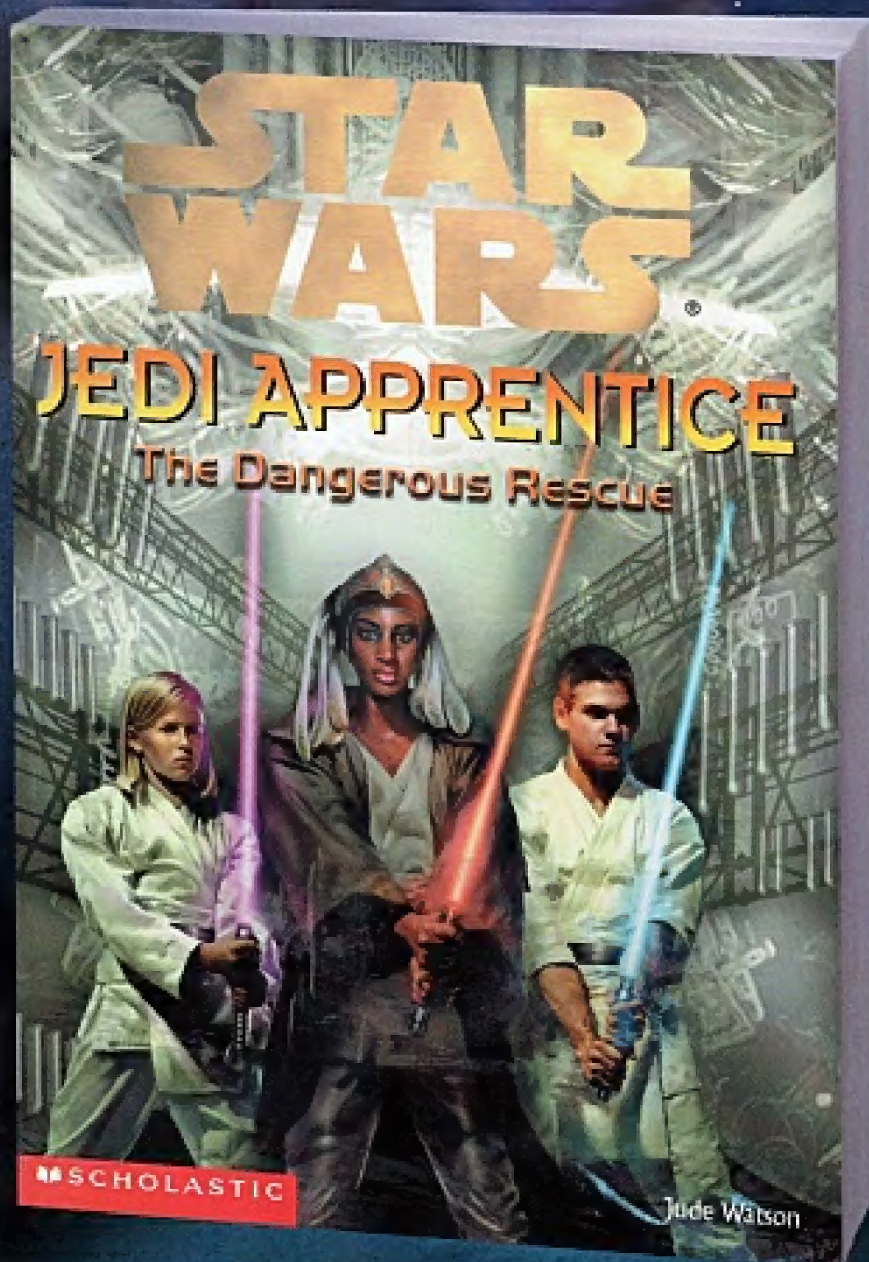


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STAR WARS®

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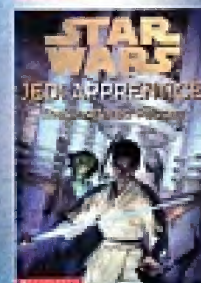
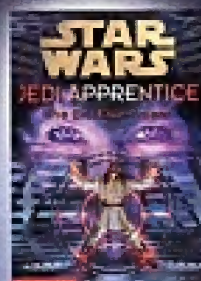
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